

Escalators Dangerous for Children in Crocs

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Parents have always had to pay close attention to children on escalators. The popularity of soft-soled shoes such as the Crocs™ brand has created a situation that requires greater attention. In May 2008, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) reported that it had collected reports of 77 “entrapment incidents” on escalators since January 2006. An “entrapment incident” is when a person’s hand, foot, or shoe is trapped in an escalator. The most common incident is when a foot is caught. About half of the incidents reported resulted in an injury, and all but two involved soft-sided flexible clogs like Crocs™.

According to the CPSC, “soft-sided shoes are the most likely to get stuck and pose the possibility of injury to the rider.” This includes not only Crocs™ but flip-flops. In April 2007, a 3-year-old girl had to have two toes partially amputated after her Croc™ got stuck in an escalator at the Atlanta airport. In addition to the tips shown below, ABC News reports that “experts say parents should make sure children ride in the center of the escalator step. Parents of small children should carry them, and kids should not run their foot along the wall – that creates friction and heat, which could explain why the Crocs™ seem to melt around the edge of the step.”

Consumer Reports compiled a list of tips for escalator safety from the CPSC and the Washington Metro subway system:

- Before climbing aboard, look to see where the emergency shutoff buttons are in case you need to stop the escalator. The buttons are usually at the top and bottom of each escalator and can be used to stop the escalator in an emergency.
- Check the direction of the escalator before you take the first step.
- To avoid the sides of steps where entrapment can occur, stand in the middle of the step. Always face forward and hold the handrail.
- Step over the comb plate. Always pick up your feet and step carefully on or off the escalator. Never drag or slide your feet off the edge of the escalator.
- Stay clear of moving parts. Keep your hands, feet and clothing clear of the side panels of the escalator. Remember: loose shoe laces, rubber boots and baggy clothes can get caught in the moving parts of the escalator. Make sure you have no dangling clothing or loose shoelaces that could get caught.
- Always hold children's hands on escalators and do not permit children to sit or play on the steps.
- Never walk up the down escalator or vice versa.

- Do not bring children onto escalators in strollers, walkers or carts.
- Stand upright. Never lean on the side of the escalator or sit on the stairs. Never ride on the handrail.
- Do not run on an escalator.
- Exit promptly from the escalator. Never stop, stand or play at an escalator landing; this can cause a dangerous pileup.