Toddlers at Risk of Paper Shredder Injury in the Home

A printable leaflet, warning of the dangers and outlining safe practice when using a paper shredder, is available to download in a print-friendly format from their shredders website which can be found at www.abt-shredders.co.uk

(PRWEB) February 9, 2006 -- The increase in the number of paper shredders being bought for home use in the UK, as a result of the increased publicity that is being given to identity theft and fraud, is likely to result in horrific finger injuries to toddlers judging from what has happened in the USA where domestic shredders have been more commonplace for a number of years.

The US Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) carried out an investigation of reported injuries, including amputations, and the characteristics of paper shredders that might have contributed to those injuries. The National Electronics Injury Surveillance System (NIES) database collected 23 reported finger injuries attributable to paper shredders. The ages of the victims ranged from 14 months upwards.

The most severe injuries, amputations, involved children. Injury occurred when a child was feeding paper into a shredder (under adult supervision) and did not release the paper in time to prevent their fingers from entering the shredder opening. As the paper shredder continued to pull the paper into the shredder opening, it also pulled in the children’s fingers.

Since most paper shredders have auto start features, a child can be at risk even when an adult is present. A child may insert a piece of paper into the shredder opening and activate the shredder mechanism, allowing it to pull the paper (and possibly the child’s fingers) into the shredder. Children are not conscious of hazards to themselves and may not let go of the paper as it is being pulled in.

Paper shredders can pose a risk of finger injury to children as young as 15 months because of their small finger size. With no force applied, a child’s finger would be unlikely to penetrate the shredder opening since their finger diameter is typically larger than a paper shredder opening. However, depending on the design of the shredder, the shredder opening may enlarge as the shredder pulls in the paper and child’s fingers. The height of a 15-month-old can be more than twice the height of a domestic paper shredder, putting them within easy reach of the paper shredder opening.

AB Technology (London) Ltd, authorised dealers for 8 major shredder manufacturers, have been warning of the danger for some weeks now since learning of the injuries being caused by certain domestic paper shredders in the USA. A printable leaflet, warning of the dangers and outlining safe practice when using a paper shredder, is available to download in a print-friendly format from their shredders website which can be found at www.abt-shredders.co.uk. Vincent Woodall, sales and marketing manager of ABT, urges anyone who has a shredder to at the very least read or better, display the leaflet anywhere a child may be in close proximity to a paper shredder, to alert users of the danger posed to small children.

David Jenkins, of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents was quoted in the Daily Telegraph of 9th February as saying “I am not aware of a problem in this country yet but with the increasing popularity of paper shredders -- and if similar designs are available as in America -- accidents are likely to happen”.

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