



KENTUCKY

General News

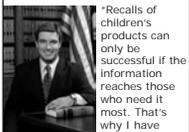
February 2010

Attorney General Conway Launches KY Kids Alert Initiative

Join the
KY Kids Alert
Team!



Help protect
Kentucky kids from
dangerous children's
products. Sign up
today for free child
product recall alerts.



"Recalls of children's products can only be successful if the information reaches those who need it most. That's why I have joined with the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and Cabinet for Health and Family Services to launch our **KY Kids Alert** initiative to ensure that Kentucky parents and child care providers are aware of the latest child product recall information. Working together, we can ensure a safer and brighter future for Kentucky kids."
— Attorney General Jack Conway

Sign up for free child product recall alerts at

www.cpsc.gov
or
ag.ky.gov

Attorney General Jack Conway and the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) have partnered with the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) to launch KY Kids Alert, a new statewide initiative to ensure that child care facilities as well as parents receive child product recall information.

"Recalls of children's products can only be successful if the information reaches those who need it most," said General Conway.

As part of the KY Kids Alert Initiative, nearly 3,000 Kentucky child care centers and certified family child care homes are now signed up to receive free child product recall alerts from the CPSC. Additionally, the KY Kids Alert partners will distribute materials about this important initiative to public health departments, child care resource and referral agencies and credentialed early care and education trainers across the Commonwealth.

Nearly 64,000 nursery product-related injuries were reported in U.S. emergency rooms in 2008. Nearly 250 deaths were associated with nursery products from 2004-2006. In September 2009, a seven-month-old Princeton, KY boy died after becoming entrapped in a Simplicity crib that had been recalled.

Consumers can see the latest child product recall information or sign up to receive these potentially lifesaving alerts at www.ag.ky.gov or www.cpsc.gov.



Attorney General Conway with Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services Inspector General Mary Begley, and Dennis Blasius, Eastern Regional Director of the CPSC

More information — <http://bit.ly/dxNVjH>

Kentucky Parents, Community Leaders Praise Topix.com Inquiry

Responding to dozens of calls and complaints from concerned parents, community leaders and school officials, Attorney General Conway called on Topix.com to provide information regarding its policies dealing with abusive posts that appear to violate the website's terms of service.

In a February 11 letter to Topix.com CEO Chris Tolles, General Conway and Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal, chair of the National Association of Attorneys General Multistate Task Force on Internet Safety, expressed their significant concerns with the Topix.com "Forums and Polls" pages as well as the website's \$19.99 fee for "priority review" of inappropriate and abusive posts, many of which are directed at children.

"Abusive or negative posts can have a devastating impact on youth. Tragically, many teenagers today turn to suicide as a way to escape abuse or cyberbullying on the Internet," said General Conway. "I have heard from parents, consumers and officials from across Kentucky who have complained about the outrageous comments that are allowed to be posted and not policed by Topix. General Blumenthal and I find it deplorable that any website would deliberately create an environment where false and derogatory comments about children, or anyone, would be permitted and then allowed to remain on the website."

Generals Conway and Blumenthal are hopeful Topix will address their concerns in a constructive and positive way.

More information — <http://bit.ly/cZ3BDv>



Kentucky Attorney
General
Jack Conway

Home Service USA to Issue Corrective Letters, Pay Restitution Following Misleading Mail Solicitation

Under an agreement reached with General Conway's Office of Consumer Protection, Home Service USA and Home Service USA Repair Management will mail corrective letters to all Kentucky consumers who purchased, or will purchase, water line repair services. The agreement follows a mail piece sent by the Florida based company to Kentucky consumers that offered water line repair services. The solicitation generated confusion and resulted in numerous calls to the Better Business Bureau and Attorney General's Office due to its design and wording, suggesting that the service was a mandatory fee imposed by the utility company.



"I am pleased at the cooperation offered by Home Service USA and the swift action to ensure that Kentucky consumers are not misled by the original solicitation," said General Conway. "I also appreciate the vigilance of our consumers and utility officials in bringing this matter to our attention."

In addition to the correction measures, Home Service USA will pay a total of \$7,500 to the Commonwealth for civil penalties and the costs of investigation.

AG Conway Announces Agreement with Toyota Motor Sales to Extend Additional Services to Concerned Customers

Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A, Inc. has agreed to authorize its dealers in Kentucky to accommodate customers who have concerns about driving their recalled Toyota vehicles. Toyota announced details of the additional services for customers in a February 26 letter to attorneys general nationwide.

The dealers may utilize the following on a case-by-case basis:

- ▶ Expedited scheduling
- ▶ Pickup and return of the vehicle by a dealership representative or by flatbed truck
- ▶ Driving the customer to the dealership and/or his or her place of work
- ▶ Providing other alternate transportation, such as a rental car, a loaner vehicle, or taxi reimbursement, for the reasonable period that the customer is unable or unwilling to use his or her car

If a Toyota customer has concerns, they should contact the Toyota Customer Experience Center at 1-800-331-4331. Lexus owners should direct their inquiries to the Lexus Customer Assistance Center at 1-800-255-3987.

Convicted Child Rapist Receives Maximum Sentence

A Marshall Circuit Court judge imposed the jury-recommended maximum sentence against a man convicted of child rape in December 2009. Mark V. Rapone, 51, will serve a life sentence without the possibility of parole for 25 years for having sexual intercourse with a four-year-old child in Marshall County. He was also convicted of being a persistent felony offender in the first degree.

Rapone moved to Kentucky from Kansas after meeting the victim's grandmother in an Internet chat room.

General Conway's Office of Special Prosecutions handled the trial of this case at the request of Commonwealth's Attorney Mark Blankenship and Marshall County Sheriff Kevin Byars.



Registered Sex Offender Arrested for Possession of Child Pornography

Attorney General Conway and his Department of Criminal Investigations (DCI) announced the arrest of a lifetime registered sex offender for possession of child pornography. Investigators from General Conway's Cybercrimes Unit, with assistance from the Marion County Sheriff's Department and Lebanon Police, arrested Sharman Pike, 45, after executing a search warrant at his home on February 1, 2010.

Pike is charged with four counts of possession of matter portraying a sexual performance by a minor. The Lebanon, KY man is a lifetime registered sex offender, having been convicted in TN in 1991 of aggravated sexual battery involving a 10-year-old.

Pike's arrest is the result of an investigation by General Conway's Cybercrimes Unit, a member of the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (ICAC). A charge is merely an accusation and a defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.