

## Experts Roundtable: Addressing Parents' Concerns on Crib Recalls

Drop-side cribs have been manufactured and used for decades. Yet, in the last 5 years, there have been 18 recalls for drop-side cribs and over 9 million cribs affected. In fact, new federal standards for full-size cribs have just been announced that will phase out this type of crib entirely over the next couple years.

Here, Alison Rhodes ([The Safety Mom<sup>SM</sup>](#)) shares what parents have been telling her regarding the recent drop-side crib recalls. Alison is a nationally recognized family safety and lifestyle expert who speaks about many issues regarding child safety.

Michael Dwyer, the Executive Director of the [JPMA](#), joins us to weigh in on the pros and cons of their actions.

### DENIAL

**ALISON:** Moms who are having their second or third child feel that the drop-side crib they have is fine. If it worked for their first child with no problem, they feel they can use it again.

**MICHAEL:** If the crib was purchased new and assembled, stored and reassembled properly, the crib should provide up to 10 years of useful life, according to the [CPSC](#).

Parents can be confident that properly assembled, fully-functional cribs that are not part of a recall and are in good condition are safe for use and provide the safest sleep environment for children.

Crib recalls highlight the importance of periodically checking the hardware on your crib for any loose or broken parts and to make sure all fasteners and screws are tight. Parents are also urged to closely inspect the hardware and stability of their cribs to ensure all parts are in place and secure when assembling and re-assembling cribs. Manufacturers offer replacement instructions and manufacturer authorized parts for their cribs. Makeshift hardware should never be used.

### FEAR

**ALISON:** Parents are freaked out and confused as to which cribs are safe, so they are taking their babies out of the crib all together and often placing them in unsafe sleep environments.

**MICHAEL:** Statistics show that forty times more babies die every year from suffocation in unsafe sleeping environments than from defective cribs, and most crib complaints involve second-hand or used cribs misassembled or modified with makeshift hardware. There is no question that the safest place for a child is in a fully functional, properly assembled crib.

### CONFUSION

**ALISON:** Parents may have heard about the recalls of the drop side cribs, but many parents aren't clear on or aware of when the new standards take place and which cribs they affect.

**BPE:** Three great sources where parents can obtain information are [ASTM International](#), [CPSC's Crib Information Center](#) and [JPMA's Crib Safety Center](#).



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### ECONOMIC ISSUES

**ALISON:** We are all trying to find ways to save money these days, and a number of parents say they will just use a hand-me-down crib or purchase one from a garage sale.

**MICHAEL:** The purchase and use of second-hand product that has been passed down or purchased from a thrift store or garage sale is a huge issue, because, in those instances, hardware and/or assembly instructions could be missing or the product could have been previously recalled without the parents' knowledge.

**BPE:** Parents need to understand that, while it might be appealing to use a hand-me-down crib or one from a tag sale, this can be potentially extremely dangerous. One area to never to cut corners is on child safety.

### FRUSTRATION WITH THE PROCESS

**ALISON:** Some parents stated that it was a hassle when trying to deal with their recalled crib. The frustration left parents still using drop-side cribs because they felt they weren't getting help from certain manufacturers.

**MICHAEL:** Most crib manufacturers provide assembly instructions as well as information on how to order the proper replacement hardware via their web sites or customer service hotlines. In addition, the JPMA offers a wealth of assistance on how to obtain recall assistance on our [Recalls/Drop-Side Initiatives](#) page under the "Safety" tab on our web site.

### DISTRUST OF MANUFACTURERS

**ALISON:** Other parents are simply distrustful of manufacturers. They are annoyed because so many products are being recalled, and they feel that the manufacturer doesn't care about the safety of their child.

**BPE:** Actually, the fact that a manufacturer has proactively gone through the recall process usually indicates their concern for safety. Plus, they continue to develop new technology and better construction options to ensure the safety of our children.

**MICHAEL:** The CPSC uses the word "recall" to describe all product-related actions, including repair and provision of new or additional parts. JPMA has recommended that they consider using alternate language so that consumers are not confused and think they need to return the product.

Properly assembled and maintained drop side cribs have been in safe use for decades. They are not inherently defective. However, since December 2009, manufacturers have been producing cribs to a new ASTM standard that restricts traditional drop sides. We believe this same requirement will be adopted as part of new mandatory federal requirements later this year.

The mere fact that there were hardware complaints on drop sides over time doesn't mean they are defective. Such complaints are within the range of a reasonably expected complaint rate due to a variety of causes over many years. Please note that drop side incidents can occur due to incorrect assembly and with age related wear and tear—something that CPSC recognizes.

For more information, please take a look at the [FAQ link](#) on JPMA's [Recalls/Drop-Side Initiatives](#) page for answers to the most frequently asked questions about crib safety and recalls.

*Baby Product Experts would like to know your thoughts on the subject, so we've placed a link to this article on our [Facebook discussion page](#). Please feel free to share your constructive comments.*

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