RISK THE SEASON
AMAZON’S TOYS: Are they safe for your kid?

FREE & FAIR MARKETS INITIATIVE
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Holiday shoppers rightfully expect that the gifts they buy from a store have been thoroughly screened to ensure they are legitimate and safe. Parents have an expectation that the products they take off the shelf and wrap for their children are real and do not pose a safety hazard.

Brick and mortar stores have long maintained robust policies to prevent counterfeits and dangerous products, including requiring labels on their products that clearly identify the country of origin, monitoring goods in transit, and adhering to licensing standards. America’s most trusted retailers — those with stores across the country — have done the same for their webstores.1

But not Amazon. Instead of following the lead of major American retailers, Amazon has moved forward with a weak and porous approach to quality protection that allows counterfeits and hazardous goods to slip through the cracks. Customers often buy products they believe are from Amazon, when in reality they may come from an unscrupulous third-party seller whose reputation, integrity, and quality is unknown, because Amazon has failed to sufficiently vet them.

For years, researchers have warned of the out-of-control explosion of counterfeit products on Amazon, while the company has continuously avoided careful policing of third-party sellers.2 According to Fast Company, there is an “entire underground economy” devoted to counterfeiting every possible consumer product imaginable, which eventually end up on marketplaces with lax restrictions like Amazon.3

If allowing the sale of dangerous counterfeits wasn’t bad enough, the company continues to double down on its lax commitment to consumer protection. Amazon has aggressively lobbied against federal bipartisan legislation — the INFORM Consumers Act — which would require third-party marketplaces to verify the identities of their third-party sellers. While the company later publicly endorsed the legislation, its lobbyists were still attempting to water it down behind the scenes.4

Loose enforcement has put Amazon at odds with some of America’s largest companies — including Birkenstock, Chanel, and Nike — for failing to take down fake versions of their products. The Wall Street Journal has noted that the problem is so out of control that Amazon has effectively “ceded control” of its website to banned, unsafe, and mislabeled products.5,6 Even Amazon’s own line of AmazonBasics goods have been hijacked by counterfeiters.7

This means holiday shopping on Amazon is a roll of the dice. Fake toys can pose a number of health and safety risks — from lead poisoning to choking hazards — and contribute to some 200,000 emergency room visits each year, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.8 Amazon’s 2022 Holiday Kids Gift Book features more than 600 toys and gifts from hundreds of sellers. With so many companies, how can any parent be sure of what they are getting?

Despite Amazon claiming to invest in anti-counterfeiting measures, these issues are worsening. A new analysis by the Free & Fair Markets Initiative found that the number of recalled products on Amazon has risen 446 percent over the past four years, with exponential growth in both the size and scope of hazardous materials in 2022. Overall, more than 9 million units of dangerous products sold on Amazon have been recalled since 2019.
Highlights of the Free & Fair Markets Initiative analysis include:

Since 2019, Amazon.com, AmazonBasics, or third-party Amazon Sellers have been cited 61 times for product recalls by the Consumer Product Safety Commission. This represents a 65 percent increase compared to 2012–2018, when the company was issued 37 such citations.

- The 61 citations covered a wide variety of consumer safety violations, including of the Federal Hazardous Substances Act, the Phthalate Permanent Ban Limit, and for failing to meet federal flammability standards. Products also were cited for posing a variety of impact injury, asphyxia, drowning, chemical burns, suffocation, strangulation, entrapment, entanglement, and electrocution hazards.

- The largest number of recalls were for products that posed burn or fire hazards, followed by products that contained lead paint, phthalates, or otherwise posed a poisoning hazard.

- 36 of the citations were against products sold exclusively on Amazon, while 4 were against AmazonBasics products.

- Many of the recalls were for children’s products, including toys, games, clothing, and classroom accessories.

Recalls of products sold on Amazon are increasing in size and scope. Since 2019, they have increased 525 percent, hitting a peak in 2022.

At the same time, the type of violation the Consumer Product Safety Commission issued against products sold by third parties on Amazon or against AmazonBasics quadrupled.

Fake and unsafe products pervade Amazon for a simple reason: profit. As the company keeps a percentage of any sale made by a third-party, it adheres to a “sell first, ask questions later” policy that is harmful to consumers. It is so easy to sell fake goods on Amazon that you can even buy fake reviews for those fake products — in bulk. The selection is vast, forming what The Washington Post has called a “flea market of fakes,” ranging from pills to toys to Hermès luxury bracelets.9 10

Amazon’s 2022 Holiday Kids Gift Book highlights its favorite toys of 2022, spotlights small businesses, shares family activities, and promotes climate and sustainability-friendly gift ideas. Nowhere to be found are the troves of counterfeit, hazardous, or downright dangerous toys littered across the platform. This catalog shines a light on some of those products.
In October 2022, Ekouaer was cited by the Consumer Product Safety Commission for failing to meet federal flammability standards for children’s sleepwear. Consumers who purchased the bathrobes were asked to destroy the garments by cutting them in half and sending Ekouaer a photo of the destroyed garment. The product was manufactured in China and was available on Amazon.com from March 2020 through July 2021 for $19–$38, depending on the style.

Ekouaer has an Amazon Storefront page promoting a wide range of clothing products, including pajama sets, nightgowns, maternity clothes, and swimwear.

In September 2022, the Amazon exclusive Yuboloo "Baby Bath Seat, X002TS8NND" was recalled for posing a drowning hazard to babies, as the product can tip over. The bath seat failed to meet federal safety standards for infant bath seats, including requirements for stability and leg openings. Consumers were advised to immediately stop using the bath seat. The product was manufactured in China and was available on Amazon.com from May 2021 through November 2021 for $36.

In November 2022, Tangame Toys "Busy Houses," sold exclusively on Amazon.com from May 2022 through July 2022 for $200, was recalled for violations of the federal lead paint, lead content, and phthalate content bans. The products were manufactured in China and sold on Amazon.com from May 2022 through July 2022 for $200. Tangame maintains an Amazon Storefront page promoting a variety of children’s toys, including their "Geometric Fun Cube Puzzle," "Busy Book for Kids," and "Stacker Stacking Ring Game."

In October 2022, the Addo Play “Early Learning Centre Little Senses Lights & Sounds Shape Shorter,” marketed to children 6 months to 36 months of age and sold exclusively on Amazon.com, was recalled for a choking hazard violation. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the toy’s red cube can detach during use and release a small ball inside the piece, posing a choking hazard to infants. The product was manufactured in China and was sold on Amazon.com from October 2020 through August 2022 for about $25. Addo Play has a variety of product lines available on Amazon, including its “Early Learning Centre” brand.

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4moms has received two reports of entanglement incidents involving infants who became caught in the strap under the unoccupied MamaRoo infant swing after they crawled under the seat, including a 10-month-old infant who died from asphyxiation, and a 10-month-old infant who suffered bruising to his neck before being rescued by a caregiver. No incidents involving the RockaRoo have been reported.

The swings and rockers were sold online at 4moms.com and Amazon from January 2010 through August 2022 for between $160 and $250.

4moms continues to sell a wide range of baby swings, rockers, and cribs on their Amazon Storefront page.

**LEAD WATER TAP**
RECALL DATE: AUGUST 25, 2022
UNITS RECALLED: 190

**HAZARD:** The brass water tap of the toy contains levels of lead that exceed the federal lead content ban. Lead is toxic if ingested by young children and can cause adverse health issues.

In August 2022, the Amazon exclusive “Mud Kitchens” by Big Game Hunters was recalled due to its brass water tap, which exceeded the federal lead content ban. Consumers were asked to immediately stop using the recalled product and to remove and dispose of the brass water tap. The product was manufactured in China and sold on Amazon for $200 to $300, depending on the model.14

Big Game Hunters shares an Amazon Storefront with Giant Games and currently has a variety of children’s toys for sale.

**TOXIC BABY BOTTLES**
RECALL DATE: JULY 28, 2022
UNITS RECALLED: 177

**HAZARD:** The markings on the outside of the bottles contain levels of lead that exceed the federal lead content ban. Lead is toxic if ingested by young children and can cause adverse health issues.

In July 2022, NUK’s “First Choice Glass Baby Bottles” were recalled due to a violation of the federal lead content ban. The design elements surrounding the product exceeded levels of lead, which if ingested can cause critical health issues to young children. The product was manufactured in Germany and sold on Amazon from January 2018 to May 2022 for about $20.15

NUK has an Amazon Storefront page where it sells a wide range of products for infants, including baby bottles, pacifiers, cups, tableware, and breastfeeding support.

**ENTANGLEMENT AND STRANGULATION ROCKER**
RECALL DATE: AUGUST 15, 2022
UNITS RECALLED: 2,000,000 MAMAROO SWINGS, 220,000 ROCKAROO ROCKERS

**HAZARD:** When the swing or rocker is not in use, their restraint straps can dangle below the seat and non-occupant crawling infants can become entangled in the straps, posing a strangulation hazard.

4moms has received two reports of entanglement incidents involving infants who became caught in the strap under the unoccupied MamaRoo infant swing after they crawled under the seat, including a 10-month-old infant who died from asphyxiation, and a 10-month-old infant who suffered bruising to his neck before being rescued by a caregiver. No incidents involving the RockaRoo have been reported.

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**BABY WALKER ENTRAPMENT HAZARD**
RECALL DATE: MARCH 19, 2020
UNITS RECALLED: 3,600

**HAZARD:** The baby walkers fail to meet the federal safety standard. Specifically, they can fit through a standard doorway and are not designed to stop at the edge of a step as required by the federal safety standard, and they have leg openings that allow the child to slip down until the child’s head can become entrapped at the neck. Babies using these walkers can be seriously injured or killed.

In March 2020, thousands of Kids & Koalas-branded baby walkers were recalled due to failure to meet federal safety standards. The walker was manufactured in China by Utomen and sold exclusively on Amazon from September 2017 through July 2018 for between $89 and $123.19

In July 2022, NUK’s “First Choice Glass Baby Bottles” were recalled due to a violation of the federal lead content ban. The design elements surrounding the product exceeded levels of lead, which if ingested can cause critical health issues to young children. The product was manufactured in Germany and sold on Amazon from January 2018 to May 2022 for about $20.

NUK has an Amazon Storefront page where it sells a wide range of products for infants, including baby bottles, pacifiers, cups, tableware, and breastfeeding support.
POISONING WHILE RIDING

RECALL DATE: JANUARY 9, 2020
UNITS RECALLED: 370

HAZARD
Paint on the canopy’s frame contains levels of lead that exceed the federal lead paint ban and tricycle components contain levels of lead that exceed the federal lead content ban. Lead is toxic if ingested by young children and can cause adverse health issues.

In January 2020, Thesaurus Global Marketing recalled its “Little Bambino” 4-in-1 canopy children’s tricycles for failing to meet federal lead paint standards. Specifically, the canopy’s frame and other tricycle components contain high levels of lead, which can lead to detrimental health issues if ingested by young children.

In June 2022, the Consumer Product Safety Commission recalled Kids Tales-branded children’s pajamas due to failure to meet the flammability standards for children’s sleepwear. Consumers were asked to immediately take the recalled sleepwear away from children and destroy the garments by cutting them in half. The pajamas were manufactured in China and sold exclusively on Amazon.com from November 2021 through April 2022 for between $13 and $33.

Kids Tales maintains an Amazon Storefront page where they promote a wide range of children’s clothing.

PAJAMA BURN HAZARD

RECALL DATE: JUNE 30, 2022
UNITS RECALLED: 9,100

HAZARD
The children’s pajamas fail to meet the flammability standards for children’s sleepwear, posing a risk of burn injuries to children.

In June 2022, the Consumer Product Safety Commission recalled Kids Tales-branded children’s pajamas due to failure to meet the flammability standards for children’s sleepwear. Consumers were asked to immediately take the recalled sleepwear away from children and destroy the garments by cutting them in half. The pajamas were manufactured in China and sold exclusively on Amazon.com from November 2021 through April 2022 for between $13 and $33.

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NIGHTGOWN BURN HAZARD

RECALL DATE: JUNE 30, 2022
UNITS RECALLED: 2,000

HAZARD: The children’s nightgowns fail to meet the flammability standards for children’s sleepwear, posing a risk of burn injuries to children.

In June 2022, iMOONZZZ’ children’s nightgowns were recalled due to failure to meet the flammability standards for children’s sleepwear, posing a risk of burn injuries to children. Consumers were asked to cut the garments in half and send the sellers a photo of the destroyed garment. The product was manufactured in China and sold exclusively on Amazon.com from June 2019 through May 2022 for between $13 and $39, depending on style and if sold individually or as a set.

iMOONZZZ currently has a variety of children’s nightgowns and Christmas decorations available on Amazon.

UNSTABLE BATH SEAT

RECALL DATE: AUGUST 19, 2021
UNITS RECALLED: 120

HAZARD: The bath seats fail to meet the federal safety standard for infant bath seats, including requirements for stability and leg openings, and can tip over while in use, posing a drowning hazard to babies.

In August 2022, a line of Frieyss’ Infant Bath Seats was recalled due to failure to meet federal safety standards for infant bath seats. The model failed requirements for stability and leg openings and could tip over while in use, posing threat of drowning to babies. The bath seats were manufactured in China by Qingdao Ruaxian Electronic Technology and sold exclusively on Amazon from March 2021 through April 2021 for $40.

Frieyss currently sells dog costumes and tool pouches on Amazon.
In September 2022, Kolan’s Otter MOMO children’s sandals were recalled due to a violation of the federal lead content ban. The inner layer of the sandals contained exceeding levels of lead, which is toxic if ingested by young children and can cause detrimental health issues. The recalled models (model D741, model D723) were manufactured in China and sold only on Amazon from March 2022 through April 2022 for between $22 and $26.

Otter MOMO maintains an Amazon Storefront page where they promote a wide variety of children’s shoes.

LEAD-LADEN SANDALS
RECALL DATE: SEPTEMBER 1, 2022
UNITS RECALLED: 100

HAZARD: The inner layer of the recalled sandals contains levels of lead that exceed the federal lead content ban. Lead is toxic if ingested by young children and can cause adverse health issues.

Amazon has received 13 reports of chair leg bases breaking, including one report of a minor shoulder injury.

In October 2022, the AmazonBasics Executive Desk Chair was recalled due to a weak leg base, posing fall and injury hazards. Amazon received 13 reports of chair leg bases breaking and one report of a shoulder injury. Consumers were asked to immediately stop using the recalled chair. The product was manufactured in China and sold from September 2021 through April 2022 for between $103 and $170.

LEG-LESS CHAIR
RECALL DATE: OCTOBER 27, 2022
UNITS RECALLED: 11,400

HAZARD: The chairs’ leg base can break, posing fall and injury hazards.

In June 2021, the Barshee Fishing Hero toy games for children was recalled due to a violation of the federal lead content ban. The metal rollers on the bottom of the flying dinosaur figures contain high lead levels, which is toxic if ingested by young children and can cause serious health problems. Consumers were advised to immediately take the recalled toys away from children.

The product was manufactured by Shantou Chanxing Toy Industry in China and sold exclusively on Amazon from February 2021 to April 2021 for about $30.

POISONED WHILE FISHING
RECALL DATE: JUNE 10, 2021
UNITS RECALLED: 300

HAZARD: The metal rollers on the bottom of the flying dinosaur figures contain levels of lead that exceed the federal lead content ban. Lead is toxic if ingested by young children and can cause adverse health issues.

Endliss has received 96 reports of batteries overheating due to thermal runaway, including 10 reports of burn injuries.

In October 2022, Endliss Technology Trianium battery phone cases for all types of mobile phones were recalled, as the lithium-ion battery in the cases could overheat resulting in thermal runaway and posing a burn hazard to consumers. Amazon received 96 reports of batteries overheating and 10 reports of burn injuries. Consumers were asked to stop using the recalled product immediately and dispose of the batteries in accordance with local laws.

BURNING PHONE CASE
RECALL DATE: OCTOBER 07, 2020
UNITS RECALLED: 357,000

HAZARD: The lithium-ion battery in the cases can overheat, resulting in thermal runaway posing a burn hazard to consumers.

These cases were manufactured in China and sold only on Amazon from September 2014 through July 2020 for between $30 and $100.

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Amazon has a responsibility to do a better job policing its platform for counterfeit and potentially dangerous goods. It must:

1. Provide transparency into where a product is coming from.
2. Immediately remove listings for potentially hazardous and counterfeit goods.
3. Ban sellers found to be selling hazardous or counterfeit goods and report them in every instance to the relevant state attorney general, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and the Federal Trade Commission.
4. Notify Customs and Border Protection when these hazardous or counterfeit goods have been imported directly from another country.

Not sure if a toy is right for your child? Here are a few tips for spotting fakes and shopping for the holidays safely:

- Carefully inspect toys upon purchase and intermittently to see if there is significant wear and tear.
- Check Consumer Product Safety Commission recalls both before purchasing and intermittently, to see if your toy is on the list.
- If you’re uncertain of a seller or manufacturer, check to see if they have their own company website.
- Look for labelling on toys that specifies if they are non-toxic or pose a choking hazard.

If you receive a counterfeit or hazardous good this holiday season, please report it immediately to the Consumer Product Safety Commission.
ENDNOTES

Explore even more at
freeandfairmarketsinitiative.org