

## **What is the chest freezer hazard?**

The chest freezer safety hazard involves chest freezers that were manufactured before 1970. Many freezers manufactured before 1970 have a hook and latch mechanism that makes it impossible for the lid to open from the inside, therefore presenting a suffocation hazard for children becoming trapped inside. Some manufacturers modified the freezer design, by developing a magnetic hold instead of a latch, before a voluntary safety standard went into effect in 1969. Unfortunately, there are still many older, non-working units, which were built before the safety standard went into effect. Tragically, 27 children have died from suffocation after becoming trapped in these freezers. The deaths occurred in non-working freezers stored outside, in basements or garages. Victims ranged in age from two to fourteen. In many cases, more than one child suffocated inside the freezer.



**Use utility knife to remove gasket.**

**Remove screws to disable handle.**



## **How can I determine if my chest freezer is a suffocation hazard?**

The affected freezers were manufactured between 1945 and 1970 by numerous manufacturers, most of whom do not exist today. Names and model numbers of the affected units are not known and therefore, you must examine each unit individually. To determine if you have an affected chest freezer:

**1.)** Check if the freezer has a lock and key. If it does, make sure the freezer is in the unlocked position. Once it is unlocked, or if it does not have a key lock, continue with the second step.

**2.)** Test the product by trying to open the freezer without using the handle by lifting up on the front corners of the lid. If the freezer lid does not open, the product could entrap and suffocate a child. If the freezer lid opens by lifting on the corners, the product is not a safety hazard.

## **What can I do to make the chest freezer safe?**

Most likely, the chest freezer is not being used for cold food storage and should be disposed of without delay. Disposal information is available by calling the Steel Recycling Institute at 1-800 YES-1CAN. Disposal is available at no cost or low cost in most locations. If this is not possible, there are steps you can take to make the product safe while keeping it in your home or on your property. Follow our easy step-by-step instructions to remove the latch.

(SEE COLUMN AT RIGHT.)

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## **What precautions should I take until the chest freezer is disposed?**

When the chest freezer cannot be disposed of immediately, you should follow the instructions to remove the latch and gasket from the freezer. Also, you should keep children away from the freezer until the latch is disabled or the freezer is disposed.

## **Please follow these simple instructions to disable your freezer.**

1.) Many different styles of chest freezer latches were used before 1970. Examine the handle and catch to determine the type of screwdriver needed to remove the screws on the catch or the handle.

2.) Using the screwdriver, remove the screws on the lower portion of the freezer or the screws from the handle. Note: To remove screws easier, WD-40 or similar product may be necessary.

3.) The objective is to remove at least one part of the lock so that the lid can be opened from the inside. Then test the lid to see if it opens by lifting on its front corners.

4.) Using a utility knife, remove the rubber gasket that surrounds the perimeter of the freezer lid. Removing the gasket will help create an air space.

## **What if the chest freezer is still working?**

Chest freezers that are still working generally do not present the same hazard as a non-working freezer since children tend not to hide in an operating freezer. However, once the freezer stops working it will present a safety hazard. The sticker that is included in this brochure should be placed on the working freezer to remind you that once it stops working, it should be immediately disposed or disabled.

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## **I have a friend/relative who has a chest freezer also. What should he or she do?**

If you know someone who has a similar type of chest freezer, you can share this information or ask him or her to call the chest freezer information line at 1-800-267-3138 to receive a copy of this brochure.



**It could save the life of a child!**

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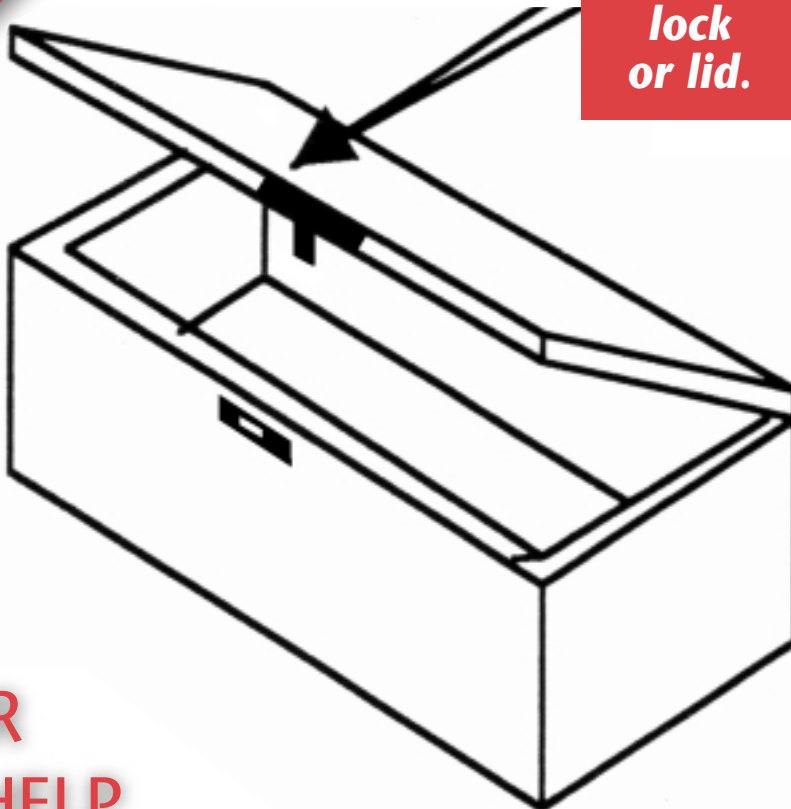
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Suite 402  
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Place  
Stamp  
Here

# FREEZER DANGER

# FREEZER

Remove  
lock  
or lid.



# TOGETHER WE CAN HELP PREVENT FUTURE TRAGEDIES

# DANGER

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