

# THE LEGAL OUTLOOK

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## Another Family Suffers Due to Faulty Smoke Detectors

Another family has suffered due to defective smoke detectors. Desiree Wylie of Coatesville, PA lost her 11-year-old son and 2 grandsons due to a house fire. She claims to have had 7 smoke detectors scattered throughout her home, but none were sounding as she woke up and tried to reach the children. The boys' death was due to severe smoke inhalation.

These ionization smoke detectors can mean the difference between life and death. There are 2 types of smoke detectors available to the consumer: photoelectric and ionization. Photoelectric are designed to detect slow, smoldering fires, while ionization smoke detectors are less sensitive to detecting these types of common household fires.

Kidde Inc., one of the nation's largest manufacturers and distributor of smoke detectors, has been accused of misleading consumers about the importance of having both ionization and photoelectric smoke detectors. Messa & Associates is still in the discovery process of a case involving the family of 7 who perished in a house fire due to use of ionization smoke detectors. Messa has handled several other cases involving smoke detector defects, including a \$3.7 million dollar recovery for the death of a 9-year-old boy in a house fire, and a \$1 million dollar recovery for faulty smoke detectors.

Messa & Associates is one of the few law firms through out the country with experience and expertise in these defective smoke detector claims. If you or someone you know has been effected by a similar accident and would like more information regarding these or other matters, please contact our office immediately at 866.403.4LAW or 215.568.3500.



## Old navy Toy Recall

Old Navy Stores recently recalled approximately 40,900 "stuffed creature toys" that have been distributed throughout the U.S. and Canada. The stuffed toys, made in the U.S., come in a variety of styles, such as a rabbit, penguin and reindeer. They were sold at Old Navy Stores and on its Web Site from July through February (Please see photo below). They have been recalled due to the 2 button eyes that could detach, posing a choking hazard to young children. For more information on this and other product recalls, please visit Messalaw.com.

## Important Facts For You and Your Baby About Kernicterus

Many new or soon-to-be moms are familiar with the possibility of their newborns being jaundiced. In some newborn babies, the liver makes up too much yellow pigment called bilirubin (red blood cells). The skin and whites of the eyes turn yellow when there is too much bilirubin in the newborn's body. This form of yellow coloring is called jaundice.

In the United States alone, 60 % of newborn infants are affected with jaundice. Most cases of jaundice are not a problem, and usually go away on their own. If left untreated though, too much bilirubin can damage the baby's brain and cause permanent damage.

Kernicterus is a form of brain damage caused by excessive jaundice. Bilirubin, the substance that causes jaundice, is so high that it can move out of the blood and into the brain tissue. This type of brain damage can cause athetoid cerebral palsy, hearing loss, vision, dental issues, and mental retardation. If untreated, many infants with kernicterus die.

Lethargy is a very common sign of the first stages of kernicterus, and must be addressed immediately. Other symptoms in-

clude difficulty to arouse (will wake up fully or cannot be kept awake), high pitched cry, decreased muscle tone (hypertonic) with episodes of increased muscle tone, arching of their head and back backwards, and fever. If these symptoms continue, a newborn may arch their heads back into a very contorted position known as opisthotonus or retrocollis.

When these symptoms occur, permanent brain damage may be occurring, and immediate treatment is needed to prevent any further damage. According to the University of Virginia Kernicterus & Newborn Treatment, phototherapy must start immediately, with lights placed as close as possible to the baby, a stat measurement of blood bilirubin should be sent, hydrate the baby with fluids and tube fed and elemental infant formula, and the baby should be blood typed in case a transfusion is needed. The sooner the bilirubin is decreased, the better, and the less permanent brain damage will occur.

Please contact Messa & Associates for more information on this and other newborn infant risks of serious injury from medical negligence.

## Recent Settlements and Verdicts:

\$350,000 settlement obtained for a medical malpractice case involving the death of an 80-year-old man after being prescribed the wrong dosage of diabetic medication. The treatment caused him to go into hypoglycemic shock, caused brain damage and multi-organ failure, and resulted in his death.



\*For more information please contact Messa & Associates, P.C. toll free at 1.866.403.4LAW or visit [www.Messalaw.com](http://www.Messalaw.com)