

HB

235

zero note
1/31/90

DATE: 2/6/90

FURTHER: Judiciary

DATE TURNED INTO OFFICE: 4/12/90

Labor and Commerce

Committee considered

CS HB 235 (Judiciary)

An Act relating to safety involving refrigerators and similar equipment.

and recommended:

replace with _____ CS
 or adopt _____ CS

~~HB 235 (Jud)~~

same title
 new title
 technical title change (HB only)

attached amendment(s)

_____ letter of intent adopted

do pass

do not pass

no recommendation

individual recommendations

further referral to _____

ATTACHES NEW FISCAL NOTE(S):

Dept/Date:

fiscal note(s) _____

zero fiscal note(s) _____

appropriation-no fiscal note

APPROVES PREVIOUS:

Dept/Date:

fiscal note(s) _____

zero fiscal note(s)
Dept of Labor 4/18/90

Governor's bill w/fiscal note

SIGNING DO PASS:

Jan Lutz
Robert Bodey

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS:

Robert Bodey
Chair: Signature and Recommendation

FISCAL NOTE

REQUEST:

Revision Date: _____
Title: "An Act relating to safety involving certain kinds of equipment and containers."
Sponsor: Gruenberg and Hoffman
Requestor: House Judiciary

Agency Affected: Labor
BRU: Labor Standards & Safety
Components: Mechanical Inspection

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93	FY 94	FY 95	FY 96
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND&STRUCTURES						
GRANTS,CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL						
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REVENUE						
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FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND						
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TOTAL	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Note: there is no fiscal impact in FY 90.

Prepared by: Tom Stuart, Director Phone: 264-2452
Division: Labor Standards & Safety Date: 1/18/90
Approved by Commissioner: Jim Sampson Date: 1/18/90
Agency: Department of Labor

Distribution (by preparer) :
Legislative Finance
Legislative Sponsor
Requestor
Office of Management and Budget
Impacted Agency(ies)

State of Alaska

Committees


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VICE-CHAIR, HOUSE LABOR AND COMMERCE
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Representative Max F. Gruenberg, Jr.
District 11
Spenard, Upper Midtown Anchorage

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the House
FROM: Rep. Max Gruenberg, Jr. 
DATE: February 5, 1990
RE: HB 235, Refrigerator Safety bill.

I would very much appreciate your support for HB 235. The refrigerator safety bill updates our laws to prohibit leaving a dangerous refrigerator in an area that presents an unreasonable hazard to small children. After the incident in the enclosed citation, Representative Hoffman and I reviewed our statutes and those of other states and concluded that Alaska needed this legislation to help prevent similar incidents.

The bill incorporates federal safety standards enacted in 1958 and updates our laws based the new laws in other states. It will help save lives.

Thank you.

* HONORING *

* ISAAC FRAZIER *

The members of the Fifteenth Alaska Legislature take great pride in honoring a fine young Alaskan, Isaac Frazier, who saved the lives of four young children.

On April 17, 1988, Rebecca Mary, age six, Janna Excelia, age five, and Shannon Bernice, age two, daughters of Jimmy and Chrystal Smith, and William, age four, foster son of Hielbent and Sarah Frazier were playing in the halls of the Bureau of Indian's housing complex in Bethel. These children being full of adventure and naivete during a game of "hide 'n' go seek" discovered an unplugged refrigerator that did not have the door removed. Not knowing the danger, they became locked in the refrigerator.

If Isaac, age nine, had not been looking for his little brother and heard the children's muffled cries for help, most likely they would have perished. When he found them, all were red in the face and short of breath, a very close call!

This near tragedy should serve as an example to Alaskans. All unused refrigerators and freezers should have the doors removed for the safety of our precious resource, children.

This Legislature congratulates Isaac Frazier and joins his family, friends and the residents of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta in celebrating life.



Ben Demas
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

James P. L...
PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

Date: May 6, 1988

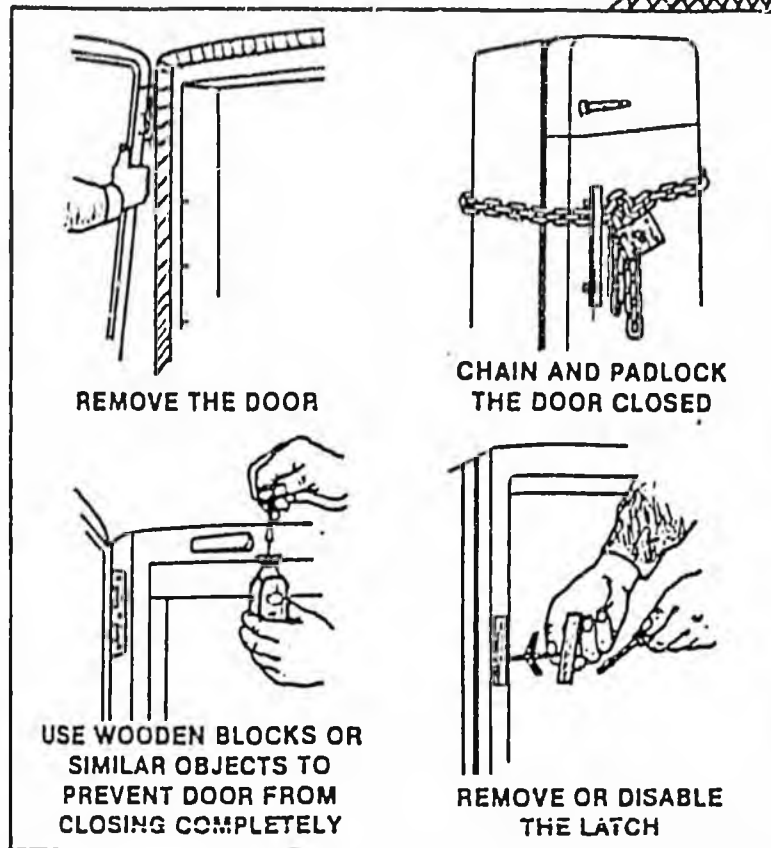
Requested by: Representative Hoffman;
Senator Binkley

Under laws administered by CPSC, an estimated 325 million potentially hazardous products have been called back from the marketplace and consumers since 1973 (when CPSC was created). Most of these were voluntarily recalled by manufacturers who established programs to repair or replace the products, or to refund the purchase price.

CPSC Warns About Suffocation and Death of Children in Old Refrigerators

L.S. & S.
ANCHORAGE

JUL 27 1988



The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) urges that all unused old-style refrigerators around the home be rendered "child-proof" or, if on public property, appropriate authorities be called to safely dispose of the products. CPSC continues to receive reports about the tragic deaths of young children who are suffocated because of entrapment in old refrigerators.

The Refrigerator Safety Act was enacted August 2, 1956. The

Act's regulations which became effective October 30, 1958 require a mechanism (usually a magnetic latch) which enables the door to be opened from the inside in the event of accidental entrapment. This type of latch, therefore, makes the hazardous refrigerators manufactured before that date easy to identify. The serious entrapment hazard occurs when children, during play, climb inside the old abandoned or carelessly stored refrigerators to hide. Many of these refrigerators are still in

RECEIVED
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OSH Anchorage

Suffocation and Death of Child in Old Refrigerators

(continued)

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use, and when they are carelessly discarded or stored where they are accessible to children, they become a danger.

The CPSC has record of 96 children's deaths since 1973 caused by suffocation resulting from entrapment in those old refrigerators. Children in the 3 and 4 year age brackets have been the most vulnerable.

While there has been some decline in deaths in recent years, 8 children died during 1983 from refrigerator entrapment. Three of these instances were double deaths occurring in Missouri, Texas and West Virginia. The other deaths were separate, involving two 3 year olds in California.

The grim statistics from refrigerator entrapments have already begun for 1984. CPSC has recently received a report of the deaths on January 31, 1984 of cousins, ages 3 and 4 in an old refrigerator in Berkley Township, New Jersey. The refrigerator was one of the old prestandard models with the self-latching mechanism on the door and was stored in an unused neighborhood garage. The children apparently both sat down on the single metal shelf near the bottom of the empty, unplugged refrigerator and the door became latched.

Double deaths are not uncommon because children naturally enjoy playing together, and old refrigerators provide an interesting place to share this fun. However, when the door slams shut, there is sudden darkness, and the normally innocent and familiar refrigerator becomes a

death trap. Suffocation then ensues because the tight fitting gasket, which is on the inside of the door to seal in the cold, cuts off the child's air. This along with the insulated construction of a refrigerator also prevents the children's screams for help from being heard.

There are several ways to "child-proof" these old discarded refrigerators. The surest method is to take off the door completely and in most cases this is a simple process using a screwdriver. If the door will not come off, chain and padlock the door permanently and tightly closed. A third alternative is to remove or disable the latch completely so the door will no longer lock when closed. A wooden block screwed to the door to keep it from closing is also a possibility. Another helpful deterrent is to leave the shelves in the refrigerator to discourage children from getting inside. Also, it is unlawful in many local jurisdictions to discard old refrigerators without first removing the door.

Old electric refrigerators are not the only killer of children. The CPSC is aware of the death of a 3 year old because of suffocation in a self-locking ice refrigerator in a camper. The parents had probably never realized that an ice box which cannot be opened from the inside presents a suffocation hazard to small children.

Consumers wishing additional information should call CPSC's toll-free Hotline at 800-638-CPSC. A teletypewriter number for the hearing impaired is 800-638-8270. (Maryland only, 800-492-8104.)