



NITE Annual Report on Product Safety (FY2002)

1. Accident Information Collection System of NITE

The National Institute of Technology and Evaluation (NITE) collects accident information on consumer products under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) such as “Home electrical appliances”, “Combustion appliances”, “Vehicles”, “Leisure items”, “Baby products”, etc. every year in relation to:

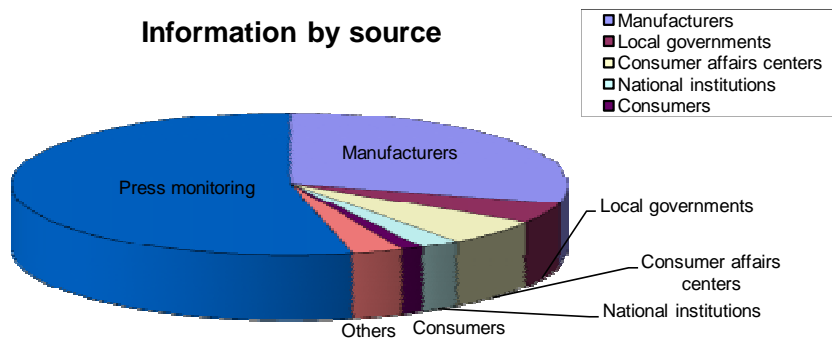
- 1) accidents causing human injury
- 2) accidents causing property damage with a high probability of causing human injury
- 3) defective products with a high probability of causing human injury

2. Accident Information Collection System and number of collected information cases

NITE seeks to collect exhaustive accident information by receiving daily information from sources including consumers, consumer affairs centers nationwide, administrative agencies, manufacturers, importers and distributors, as well as by establishing a system to acquire daily accident reports from nationwide on newspapers and the Internet.

The total number of accident information cases collected in FY2001 was 1,852. The following chart shows the breakdown by information source.

Information Source	Number of accidents	Ratio
Manufacturers	626	29.5%
Consumer affairs centers	124	5.8%
Local governments (including Fire Department)	99	4.6%
National institutions	50	2.3%
Consumers	26	1.2%
Others	64	3.0%
Subtotal	989	46.4%
Press monitoring	1,143	53.6%
Total	2,132	100.0%

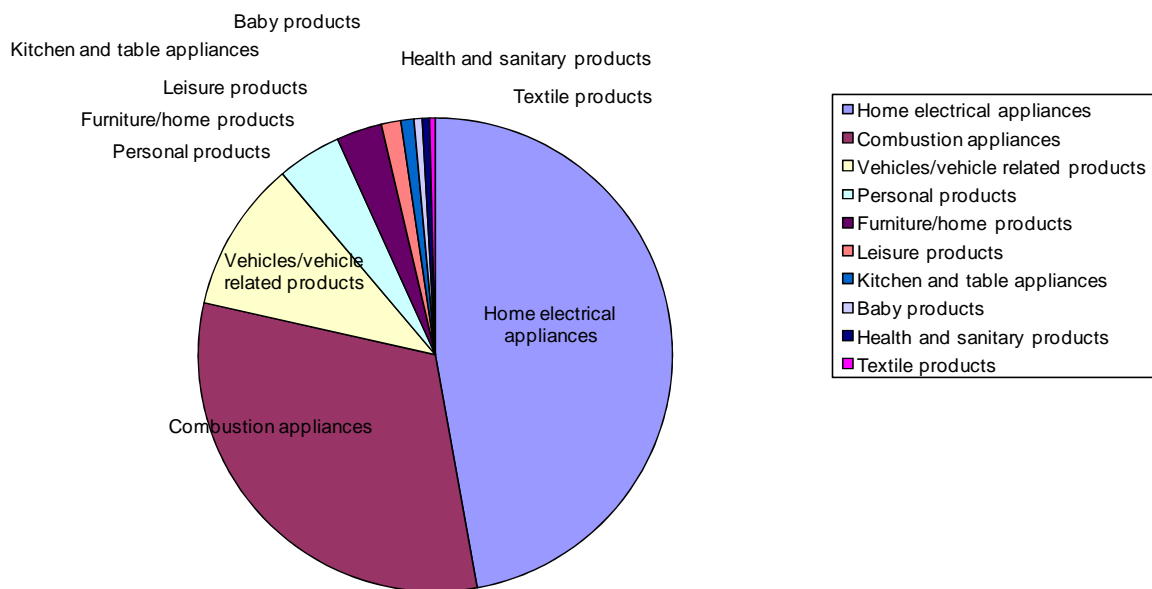


As of June 13, 2003, the net number of accidents was 1,803 when duplications and unrelated information are excluded. The breakdown of the accident information by product category is shown below.

“Home electrical appliances” ranked top, accounting for about 47% of the total, followed by “Combustion appliances” (about 31%) and “Vehicles/vehicle related products” (about 10%). The figures showed no significant changes from FY2000.

	Product classification	Number of accidents	Ratio
1	Home electrical appliances	850	47.1%
2	Combustion appliances	565	31.3%
3	Vehicles/vehicle related products	186	10.3%
4	Personal products	79	4.4%
5	Furniture/home products	56	3.1%
6	Leisure products	24	1.3%
7	Kitchen and table appliances	16	0.9%
8	Baby products	10	0.6%
9	Health and sanitary products	9	0.5%
10	Textile products	7	0.4%
11	Others	1	0.1%
	Total	1,803	100.0%

Information by product classification



3. Further Investigation of the Accidents

I. Accident investigation status

Investigations are conducted into all the collected accident information cases to clarify the circumstances of accidents. NITE initially collects detailed information on accidents through telephone interviews with information providers or involved parties, or in writing, or by visiting the people involved.

In addition, on-site investigations are proactively implemented into the causes for accidents with the possibility of frequent occurrence, and accidents related to the violation of technical standards

among serious accidents that led to death, serious injury or fire.

In FY2002, NITE conducted on-site investigations for 47 cases (*1) including the explosion of a portable gas cooking stove and fire breaking out from a washing machine.

Also verified were the products which supposedly caused accidents in 156 cases (*1) including “Home electrical appliances” such as washing machines and color TV sets, “Combustion appliances” such as kerosene heaters, and bicycles which caused physical injuries.

Once manufacturer and model are identified through investigations, NITE forwards accident information to the manufacturer, and instructs these manufacturers to submit a report on the cause of the accident and preventive measures.

The following chart shows the status of investigations conducted by NITE in FY2002.

(*1) The number of collected accident information cases decreased as the subject period was shorter by three months from the previous year.

On-site investigation / Accidental product	Conducted on-site investigation	47 cases
	Obtained the actual product which had caused accident	156 cases
Manufacturer of product (as of June 13, 2003)	Identified by report from manufacturer	528 cases
	Identified through investigation by NITE	456 cases

II. Further Investigation of serious accidents

NITE proceeds with investigations while promptly sharing information with the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) upon receiving not only initial reports, but information acquired through subsequent investigations on accidents requiring special attention; serious accidents involving human injury including death and severe injuries, and fire, frequent accidents caused by same model of products and accidents related to the violation of technical standards.

In FY2002, further investigations have been implemented in the following four cases including a fatal hair entrapment incident in a jet bath and burn injuries due to EMS belts (*2) sold by mail order:

(*2) EMS: Electrical Muscle Stimulation

Name of product	Investigation summary	Remedies
24-hour jet bath	A fatal incident was reported in November 2002 in which a girl drowned in a jet bath when her hair became entangled in the suction outlet. The investigation revealed that the configuration of the suction outlet, which made it difficult to withdraw hair once it had been sucked in and entangled, was similar to that of three cases reported previously. (In August 1992, and two cases in September 2000)	Following this case and the previous three cases, NITE issued an alert to draw consumers' attention to the matter, and distributed it to consumer affairs centers, manufacturers and distributors of jet baths and concerned parties, and also posted the alert on the NITE website in an effort to prevent further incidents. METI called for immediate preventive measures from the firm which had taken over the maintenance operations following the distributor's bankruptcy. METI also designated the circulation bath system subject to regulation under the Consumer Product Safety Law (effective on August 1, 2003).
EMS belt	Three injuries were reported in which hole-like scars had been formed on the skin of the lower abdomen or thighs after using EMS belt. Investigations revealed that the belts had a structure which passed an electric current of up to 0.7A through the human	Although it is not possible to state categorically that the product is unsafe, NITE issued an alert to draw consumers' attention to the matter, and distributed it to consumer affairs centers, manufacturers and distributors and concerned parties, and also posted the alert on the NITE

	body intermittently in short bursts every 0.02 seconds for 4-5 times; and repeated this action in an 0.2 second cycle for 10 minutes. Although they may cause burn injuries depending on individual differences in user constitution or usage methods, it is not necessarily appropriate to regard these products as unsafe at this point, assuming that the user follows instructions such as applying gel on the skin and refraining from prolonged use. It was found that prolonged use or misuses of EMS belts may cause injuries.	website. METI requested distributors of EMS belts to initiate measures to educate consumers about the safe use of the products.
Aroma candle (imported)	A big flame arose 5 minutes after lighting a candle without removing the transparent cover film, resulting in a burnt desk, tatami mat and cushions. Although the film should be removed prior to lighting, the instruction was written in French, and as the wick protruded through the film, it could be lit without the film being removed. In such a case, the resulting flame can cause extended fire damages.	NITE issued an alert to draw consumers' attention to the matter, distributed it to consumer affairs centers, manufacturers and distributors and concerned parties, and also posted the alert on the NITE website.
Double structured cookware	While preheating a stainless steel pan with a double wall structure (the inner pan welded into the outer pan at the bottom and the flanges with air-space in between to retain heat) the inner pan deformed significantly, causing the lid to spring off and the contents to burst out. Investigations showed that the product could cause injuries, as the inner pan could rise at the bottom or be separated from the outer pan and spring up under certain usage conditions and circumstances.	NITE issued two safety alerts in an attempt to draw consumers' attention, and distributed them to consumer affairs centers, manufacturers and distributors and concerned parties, and also posted these alerts on the NITE website.

III. Investigation on products

NITE looks into all collected accident information and conducts accident information processing tests or market monitoring tests to identify the causes when these accidents; require clarification of the cause of accidents; have uncertain origins; or have a high probability of frequent occurrence.

Also, NITE has been attempting to establish an appropriate environment to expedite investigations by implementing tests to develop techniques for identifying causes of accidents when such methods have not been developed or the necessary basic data is not fully available.

The test results are distributed to information providers, related government institutions and industry organizations. NITE utilizes the results of investigations for technical development, and offers these techniques to related testing organizations.

Examples of product safety tests performed in FY2002 are shown below:

Test case	Outline of accident and test objectives	Test results and remedies
24-hour jet bath which caused a fatal hair entrapment incident	A fatal incident was reported in November 2002 in which a girl drowned in a jet bath when her hair became	Tests confirmed that, as with previous accidents of this nature, the design of the suction outlet allowed hair to be

	<p>entangled in the suction outlet.</p> <p>In consideration of the seriousness of the incident, NITE investigated the dynamics of maximum circulation flow of the jet bath and the strength required to release entrapped hair.</p>	<p>sucked in, while making it extremely difficult to withdraw hair once it had been entangled. The test confirmed the dynamics of maximum circulation flow and the strength required to release entrapped hair.</p>
<p>Burn injuries caused by EMS belts</p>	<p>A user suffered hole-like scars 2mm in diameter at 6 points on the abdomen after using an electrical muscle stimulation belt, and was diagnosed with low temperature burns.</p> <p>In view of the popularity of EMS belts, NITE conducted tests to identify causes.</p>	<p>According to the report, the electrode section was damaged at the parts which conformed to the location of the scars. It was found out that an electric current of up to 0.7A was passed through the body intermittently in short bursts every 0.02 seconds for 4-5 times; and that this action was repeated in an 0.2 second cycle. Although they may cause burn injuries depending on individual differences in user constitution or usage methods, it is not necessarily appropriate to regard these products as unsafe at this point, assuming that the user follows instructions such as applying gel on the skin, and refraining from prolonged use.</p>
<p>Bicycle with insecure handle post</p>	<p>A user had assembled a bicycle at the place of purchase. While riding, the handle post turned over and the user sustained bruising to the thumb.</p> <p>Tests were implemented as loss of steering control can lead to injury.</p>	<p>The handle post was presumably not sufficiently secured because the clip plate for the lifting screw was installed obliquely.</p>

Investigations to develop techniques for identifying causes of accidents performed in FY2002 are shown below:

Theme	Investigation objectives	Summary
<p>Conformation analysis of stepladder breakage using the Finite Element Method</p>	<p>36 incidents involving stepladders were reported in the past five years. No sufficient analyses were conducted for the relationship between stress distribution and the unit strength of stepladders under the conditions of the incidents as these factors were difficult to measure.</p> <p>Conformation analysis by Finite Element Method (FEM) creates a 3-D computer model to analyze stress distribution of individual parts, displacement, etc, through simulation, which enables analysis under various conditions such as load, etc. The investigation was conducted with the aim of developing the technique of conformation analysis using FEM to improve accuracy in determining accident causes.</p>	<p>It was confirmed that stress analysis was applicable and repeatable regardless of installation angle or loading direction, when the following details of the stepladder are fully available;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) shape and size (2) material and property value (3) loading condition -static load

4. Analysis of the Investigation Results and Accident Trends

I. Analysis of the investigation results

The investigation results are analyzed and evaluated from a technical perspective by “Accident cause analysis working groups (Technology groups)”. The results, together with the investigation results by NITE, are to be reviewed by the “Accident Trend Committee” for the final results.

(1) Accident Trend Committee

NITE has established the “Accident Trend Committee” comprised of academic experts and consumer groups to conduct fair and impartial examinations of the investigation results.

After investigating accident causes and preventive measures, the Committee implements comprehensive discussion and analysis of the accident trend based on the technical analysis and evaluation conducted by Technology groups.

(2) Accident cause engineering analysis working groups (Technology groups)

Accidents are investigated, technically analyzed and evaluated by the following four “Accident cause analysis working groups” composed of third parties such as academic experts and intellectuals, offering suggestions from the viewpoint of expertise.

Technology groups are also established for accidents caused by misuse of products, to analyze and evaluate products and their safe operation.

Technology groups	Job descriptions
Electrical Engineering	Accident analysis and evaluation of investigation results/prevention measures for smoke emission and ignition accidents caused by electric appliances including TVs, air conditioners, refrigerators and domestic wiring. Advising on tests conducted by NITE and evaluating the results.
Mechanical Engineering	Accident analysis and evaluation of investigation results/prevention measures for accidents caused by broken bicycles, fire accidents caused by combustion appliances such as kerosene heaters and bath boilers. Advising on tests conducted by NITE and evaluating the results.
Chemicals/Physical Impediment	Accident analysis and evaluation of investigation results/prevention measures for accidents caused by personal items such as gas lighters, and skin lesions including allergies caused by chemicals contained in rubber gloves or clothes, etc. Evaluation of investigation results submitted by manufacturers and preventive measures. Advising on tests conducted by NITE and evaluating the results.
Misuse	Analysis of “misuses and negligence” which led to accidents, and exploration of the current and modeled status of products. Advising on tests conducted by NITE.

II. Results of Investigations in FY2002

The investigation results are analyzed and evaluated from a technical perspective by the “Accident cause analysis working groups (Technology groups)”. The results, together with the investigation results by NITE, are to be reviewed by the “Accident Trend Committee” for the final results.

(1) Accident Information Classified by Causes

The table below shows accident information classified by causes which were collected in FY 2002.

In FY2002, investigations were completed for 1,169 incidents; 28 cases collected in FY2000, 540 in FY2001, and 601 in FY2002.

(Accident information collected in FY2000)

Note: Showing 28 cases completed in FY 2002, among 1,446 accident information collected in FY2000.

Categories According to Causes of Accidents	# of cases
Accidents caused by product	7
A : Accidents supposedly caused by problems of design, manufacturing process, labeling, etc.	7
B : Accidents supposedly caused by defective products, and affected by use conditions	0
C : Accidents supposedly caused by performance degradation due to extended periods after manufacturing and long duration of operation	0
Accidents not caused by products	4
D : Accidents supposedly caused by improper installation, repair work, handling during transportation, etc.	4
E : Accidents mainly due to misuse or negligence	0
F : Other accidents not caused by products	0
Accidents caused by unknown factors	17
Unidentified cause	17
Total	28

(Accident information collected in FY2001)

Note: Showing 504 cases completed in FY 2002, among 1,546 accident information collected in FY2001.

Categories According to Causes of Accidents	# of cases
Accidents caused by product	131
A : Accidents supposedly caused by problems of design, manufacturing process, labeling, etc.	114
B : Accidents supposedly caused by defective products, and affected by use conditions	6
C : Accidents supposedly caused by performance degradation due to extended periods after manufacturing and long duration of operation	11
Accidents not caused by products	274
D : Accidents supposedly caused by improper installation, repair work, handling during transportation, etc.	11
E : Accidents mainly due to misuse or negligence	224
F : Other accidents not caused by products	39
Accidents caused by unknown factors	135
Unidentified cause	135
Total	540

(Accident information collected in FY2002)

Note: Showing 601 cases completed in FY 2002, among 1,803 accident information collected in FY2002.

Categories According to Causes of Accidents	# of cases
Accidents caused by product	265
A : Accidents supposedly caused by problems of design, manufacturing process, labeling, etc.	238

B : Accidents supposedly caused by defective products, and affected by use conditions	7
C : Accidents supposedly caused by performance degradation due to extended periods after manufacturing and long duration of operation	20
Accidents not caused by products	186
D : Accidents supposedly caused by improper installation, repair work, handling during transportation, etc.	14
E : Accidents mainly due to misuse or negligence	157
F : Other accidents not caused by products	15
Accidents caused by unknown factors	150
Unidentified cause	150
Total	601

Of the 601 accidents for which investigations have been completed, the accident cause was identified in 451 cases; 265 cases of “Accidents caused by products” and 186 cases of “Accidents not caused by products”.

Out of “Accidents caused by products”, “Problems with design, manufacturing process or labeling” accounted for about 90 percent, or 238 cases, while “Misuse and negligence” accounted for about 84 percent, or 157 cases in “Accidents not caused by products”. The remaining 16 percent was attributed to deterioration from improper installation, repair work or natural phenomena such as lightning or high winds.

(2) Accident Information Classified by Products and Causes

The following chart shows accident information cases collected in FY2002 according to products and accident causes. “Home electrical appliances” were ranked top in accident causes. “Accidents caused by products” accounted for 221 cases, while 30 cases were supposedly caused by “Misuse or negligence” which is about 10 percent of the former.

“Combustion appliances” ranked second with 8 cases caused by product defects, while “Misuse or negligence” triggered 80 accident cases, 10 times as many as the former.

In other categories, “Accidents caused by misuse or negligence” occurred more frequently than “Accident caused by products” with 47 cases and 36 cases respectively.

The results of investigations showed that it would be effective to educate and promote consumer awareness concerning the safe use of combustion and home electric appliances to prevent accidents by misuse or negligence, in addition to improving the safety of products.

(Accident information classified by products and causes, as of June 13, 2003)

Note: Showing 601 cases completed in FY 2002 among 1,803 accident information collected in FY2002.

Accident cause Product	Caused by product				Not caused by product				Unidentified G	Total
	A	B	C	Subtotal	D	E	F	Subtotal		
Home electrical appliances	208	1	12	221	4	30	4	38	54	313
Combustion appliances	3	1	4	8	4	80	3	87	22	117
Vehicle/vehicle related	4	0	0	4	5	21	2	28	42	74
Personal products	15	1	0	16	0	12	2	14	20	50
Furniture/home products	2	2	4	8	0	3	2	5	7	20
Sanitary products	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	2

Leisure products	2	1	0	3	0	6	1	7	2	12
Kitchen and table appliances	2	1	0	3	0	2	1	3	0	6
Baby products	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	2	1	4
Textile products	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	3
Total	238	7	20	265	14	157	15	186	150	601

(Categories by cause of accident)

- A: Problems of design, manufacturing process, labeling, etc.
- B: Defective products, and affected by use conditions
- C: Performance degradation due to extended periods after manufacturing and long duration of operation
- D: Improper installation, repair work, handling during transportation, etc.
- E: Misuse or negligence
- F: Other accidents not caused by products
- G: Unidentified

(3) Injuries and Damages

The chart below shows the extent of damages classified by accident causes.

Among “Accidents caused by products”, 40 cases involved bodily injuries (severe or minor injuries), 192 cases damaged properties (extended damage beyond product breakage), and no fatal incident was reported. 73 cases of “Accidents not caused by products” involved bodily injuries while 88 cases damaged properties only.

Among “Accidents caused by products”, there were 3 serious injuries; a user fell over and was trapped by the neck in a space between the backrest and armrest of a portable toilet; a burn injury caused by the lingering flame of a disposable cigarette lighter which spread to the user’s back; a child fell over while riding a scooter and was injured when the handle hit his cheek.

Among “Accidents not caused by products”, there were 13 fatalities and 11 serious injuries attributable to “Misuse or negligence”, which include; an electrocution due to contacting a carbon fishing rod with high-voltage wiring at a railroad crossing; a carbon monoxide poisoning incident caused by using a charcoal briquette heater in a car; and a bicycle wheel catching a boy’s heel while the boy was sitting on a child safety seat for bicycles.

(Accident information classified by injuries or damages)

Showing 601 cases completed in FY 2002, among 1,803 accident information collected in FY2002.

Accident cause	Caused by product				Not caused by product				Unidenti- fied G	Total
	A	B	C	Subtotal	D	E	F	Subtotal		
Death	0	0	0	0	0	13	0	13	15	28
Serious injury	1	2	0	3	0	11	2	13	14	30
Minor injury	31	3	3	37	4	41	2	47	30	114
Extended damage	182	2	8	192	6	72	10	88	50	330
Product breakage	23	0	9	32	4	19	1	24	39	95
No damage	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	2	4
Total	238	7	20	265	14	157	15	186	150	601

(Categories by cause of accident)

- A: Problems of design, manufacturing process, labeling, etc.
- B: Defective products, and affected by use conditions
- C: Performance degradation due to extended periods after manufacturing and long duration of operation
- D: Improper installation, repair work, handling during transportation, etc.
- E: Misuse or negligence
- F: Other accidents not caused by products

(4) Preventive measures

Among 265 cases of “Accidents caused by products”, preventive measures have been taken for 250 cases or about 94 percent, by manufacturers.

The remaining 6 percent consists of cases for which measures could not be implemented because manufacturers, etc, could not be identified due to fire damage, etc, and incidents caused by deteriorated products now rarely seen in the market for which no other accident information has been collected.

For 212 of the cases for which preventive measures were taken, a total of 16 manufacturers placed company announcements in newspapers and/or on their websites, and conducted recalls or replacement programs.

Other accidents are supposedly due to incidental defects, problems of labeling or misuse, therefore, the relevant manufacturers have taken preventive measures such as promoting consumer awareness by direct mail or through their websites, improving manufacturing process, enhancing quality control and improving instruction manuals and labeling.

III. Accident Trend in FY2002

(1) Changes in Numbers of Accident Information Collection

The number of accident information cases collected by NITE in last three years were; 1,446 in FY2000, and 1,546 in FY2001, and 1,803 in FY2002, as of June 13, 2003. (excluding duplication and unrelated information)

(2) Changes in Accidents Causes

Among the accident cases collected and investigated by NITE, “Accidents caused by products” accounted for about 37 percent in FY2000, about 33 percent in FY2001 and about 44 percent in FY2002.

“Accidents not caused by products” accounted for about 39 percent, 42 percent and 31 percent respectively; among them, “Accidents caused by misuse or negligence” accounted for 32 percent in FY2000, 35 percent in FY2001 and 26 percent in FY2002.

(3) The Top 10 Items in the Last Three Years

The following chart indicates the top ten items causing accidents reported in the last three years from FY2000 to FY2002.

According to the chart, DC (direct current) power supply equipment, including battery chargers for electric shavers, was the top cause of accidents in FY2001 and FY2002. The reason is that smoke and ignition accidents occurred frequently with products of a specific manufacturer, which are currently under recall following company announcements.

“Kerosene heaters” typically have a high number of reported accident cases; ranking second from FY2000 to FY2002. In many cases, kerosene heater accidents escalate into serious incidents such as fires, and according to the investigations conducted by NITE, the majority of the cases were caused by misuse or negligence, with many cases presumed to have been caused by laundry hung above the heaters dropping onto them and catching fire, and in other cases, fires presumed to have been caused by kerosene leaking from cartridge tanks which were not sufficiently capped.

Many accident information cases concerning “Four wheel vehicles” are collected every year. The majority of them were related to vehicle fire. Fire origins cannot be identified in many cases because of significant fire damage. There were also accidents presumed to involve oil leaks, gasoline leaks, short-circuits in electric wirings and misplacing of flammable materials after repairs.

“Color TV sets” ranked fourth, with 90 cases in FY2000 and 67 cases in FY2001, following company announcements placed by two manufacturers in FY2000, announcing that prolonged use

of the products may generate cracks and pose smoke and ignition hazards. However, “Color TV sets” dropped to tenth in FY2002.

The number of collected accident information cases related to “Disposable cigarette lighters” fluctuated and ranged between 40 and 60 cases in the last three years. The majority of cases concerned burn injuries caused by big flames when igniting the lighters, or in other cases, lighters igniting in pockets and burning clothes.

Many of the accidents involving “Electric heaters” were presumed to have been caused by “Misuse or negligence”, such as flammable materials including bed clothes contacting heaters, because the users neglected to turn heaters off when leaving home or left heaters on while asleep.

“Gas cooking stoves” have ranked in the top 10 every year. Many accidents involving “Gas cooking stoves” are attributed to negligence; such as fires caused by pans left unattended on the stove.

The number of collected information cases on “Refrigerators” dropped down to 21 in FY2001 from 146 in the previous year. These accidents were related to design defects with products of a specific manufacturer, and the number of accidents has supposedly been reduced by the preventive measures taken by the manufacturer.

FY2000 (Total: 1,446 cases)			FY2001 (Total: 1,546 cases)			FY2002 (Total: 1,803 cases)		
Item	#of Cases	Ratio (%)	Item	#of Cases	Ratio (%)	Item	#of Cases	Ratio (%)
Refrigerator	146	10.1	DC power supply equipment	218	14.1	DC power supply equipment	256	14.2
Kerosene heater	130	8.9	Kerosene heater	188	12.2	Kerosene heater	180	10.0
Four wheel vehicle	116	8.0	Four wheel vehicle	124	8.0	Gas cooking stove	146	8.1
Color TV set	90	6.2	Color TV set	67	4.3	Four wheel vehicle	135	7.5
DC power supply equipment	64	4.4	Disposable cigarette lighter	62	4.0	Electric heater	97	5.4
Subtotal	546	37.6	Subtotal	659	42.6	Subtotal	814	45.2
Electric clothes drier	57	3.9	Gas cooking stove	60	3.9	Air conditioner	43	2.4
Gas cooking stove	49	3.4	Electric heater	52	3.4	Vacuum cleaner (incl. rechargeable type)	42	2.3
Disposable cigarette lighter	48	3.3	Kerosene fan heater	28	1.8	Disposable cigarette lighter	41	2.3
Kerosene fan heater	21	1.5	Refrigerator	21	1.4	Domestic wiring	37	2.1
Bicycle	20	1.4	Humidifier	21	1.4	Color TV set	32	1.8
Subtotal	195	13.5	Subtotal	182	11.9	Subtotal	195	10.9
Total	741	51.1	Total	841	54.5	Total	1,009	56.1

(*4) Distinction of gas type (LP gas or City gas) discontinued from FY2002.

The table below indicates the top 5 accident causing items for “Accidents caused by products”.

The number of accident information cases on “DC power supply equipment” was outstanding over the last three years because of frequent smoke/fire incidents due to design defects with battery chargers for electric shavers.

FY2000 (1,404 completed cases)			FY2001 (1,409 completed cases)			FY2002 (601 completed cases)		
Item	#of Cases	Ratio (%)	Item	#of Cases	Ratio (%)	Item	#of Cases	Ratio (%)

Refrigerator	142	10.1	DC power supply equipment	211	15.0	DC power supply equipment	159	26.5
DC power supply equipment	64	4.6	Disposable cigarette lighter	28	2.0	Electric foot warmer	25	4.2
Electric clothes drier	52	3.7	Color TV set	21	1.5	Disposable cigarette lighter	11	1.8
Color TV set	50	3.6	Humidifier	19	1.4	Vacuum cleaner	8	1.3
Disposable cigarette lighter	23	1.6	Vacuum cleaner	18	1.3	Washing machine	5	0.8
Total	331	23.6	Total	297	21.2	Total	208	34.6

The table below shows the top 5 accident causing items for “Accidents caused by misuse or negligence”. According to the table, “Kerosene heaters” and “Gas cooking stoves” have ranked first or second for the past three years, followed by other “Combustion appliances”.

NITE has been drawing consumer and manufacturer attention to this state of affairs by providing information on its website and in the Collected Accident Information Reports.

In order to minimize “Accidents caused by misuse or negligence”, manufacturers, etc, have been giving warnings and promoting consumer awareness in instruction manuals of kerosene heaters, and installing apparatus on gas cooking stoves to prevent fires due to overheating and failure to turn off. However, accidents continue to occur despite these efforts, which indicate that the education of consumers and the further promotion of consumer awareness are important and effective factors in the prevention of “Accidents caused by misuse or negligence”.

FY2000 (1,404 completed cases)			FY2001 (1,409 completed cases)			FY2001 (601 completed cases)		
Item	#of Cases	Ratio (%)	Item	#of Cases	Ratio (%)	Item	#of Cases	Ratio (%)
Kerosene heater	109	7.8	Kerosene heater	143	10.2	Gas cooking stove	32	5.3
Gas cooking stove	44	3.1	Gas cooking stove	46	3.3	Kerosene heater	21	3.5
Four wheel vehicle	32	2.3	Electric heater	32	2.3	Four wheel vehicle	17	2.8
Electric heater	15	1.1	Four wheel vehicle	31	2.2	Wood fueled bathtub boiler	6	1.0
Kerosene fan heater	14	1.0	Kerosene fan heater	17	1.2	Electric heater	5	0.8
Total	214	15.3	Total	269	19.1	Total	81	11.9

5. Disclosure of collected Accident Information

I. Accident Information Collection Reports

The accident information cases collected by NITE are compiled quarterly, following the necessary analyses or investigations of the cases, and approval by the Accident Trend Committee, and published as the “Collection Results of Accident Information”. This information is further compiled and published as the “Annual Report on Product Safety” to provide information to consumers, etc.

Also, NITE broadly disseminates information concerning accidents and preventive measures through its website.

II. NITE Alert

NITE Alerts (special news) are issued for cases requiring immediate action and distributed to consumers and related organizations, calling for their attention.

NITE Alerts are circulated to approximately 1,200 organizations including local consumer affairs centers, local governments, fire and police departments and related industry groups in addition to being posted on the NITE website.

In FY2002, nine NITE Alerts were issued in relation to; “24-hour jet bath”, “DC (direct current) power supply equipment for rechargeable electric shavers” and “Aroma candles”. Brief summaries of major alerts issued in FY2002 are as follows:

Accident Information “NITE Alert” Topics

No.50: Safety tips for imported Aroma candle

NITE had previously issued a general reminder for the safe use of aroma candles in NITE Alert No.39. The safety alert was re-issued due to the projected high risk of recurrence in view of the results of investigations conducted by NITE in relation to accident information involving imported French candles.

No.51: Recall information on battery chargers attached to “SEIKO shaver” by SEIKO S-YARD Co., Ltd.

SEIKO S-YARD Co., Ltd. has been recalling battery chargers attached to SEIKO Shavers for smoke emission and ignition hazards following a company announcement since June 2000. However, more incidents involving uncollected chargers continued to occur. Having been informed by METI that the company intended to repeat the company announcements, NITE also issued an alert again to boost consumer awareness.

No.56: Accident information on 24-hour jet bath

A fatal accident was reported in which a girl was discovered drowned in a jet bath with her hair entangled in the suction outlet. Similar incidents had previously occurred, and NITE issued two NITE Alerts, in December 2000 and March 2001. NITE has renewed warnings following this recurrence.

No.57: Safety tips for use of EMS belt

Three incidents were reported in relation to EMS belts, claiming muscle-building and shape-up effects, which are worn on the abdomen or thighs, and apply electrical stimulus to muscles. NITE has provided information and issued an alert in consideration of the results of its investigation which revealed that the possibility of further incidents could not be categorically dismissed subject to certain circumstances of usage.

No.58: Safety tips for use of Baby crib

Following a series of accidents including falls from baby cribs or fingers caught in opening mechanisms, the Japan Baby Bed Association reported on preventive measures to METI. NITE has provided the information and alerted consumers.