



## NITE Annual Report on Product Safety (FY2005)

### 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 following chart shows the breakdown by information source in FY2005. Information from the press was the main source of information for our system, accounting for about 65% of the total; a 55% increase from the previous year. The increment is attributed to the following; product safety emerging as a social issue after a series of fatal and non-fatal accidents involving defective automatic doors, swing rides, vehicles, etc.; increased media coverage, especially of carbon monoxide poisoning incidents caused by kerosene fan heaters, in relation to which the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry consequently issued an emergency order based on section 82 of the Consumer Product Safety Law in November 2005; increased numbers of accidents related to snow plows after heavy snowfalls between December 2005 and February 2006.

The second greatest information source was manufacturers, accounting for 19.4% of the total; a 47% decrease from the previous year. The decrease is attributed to the fact that there were fewer frequent cases reported involving particular products of specific manufacturers in FY2005 compared to FY2004 when the number of accident reports from businesses rose substantially, partly due to corporate ethics being recognized as a social problem due to manufacturers hiding accidents.

Proportions of information from other sources are; Local governments including fire departments (6.6%) and Consumer affairs centers (4.6%). The number of information cases from these two sources increased by 75% and 30% respectively from the previous year.

Information Source	Number of accidents	Ratio (year on year)
Manufacturers	575	19.4% (-47%)
Local governments (including Fire Dep.)	194	6.6% (+75%)
Consumer affairs centers	136	4.6% (30%)
National institutions	46	1.6% (-43%)
Consumers	41	1.4% (-15%)
Others	44	1.5% (-21%)

Subtotal	1,036	35.1% (-30%)
Press monitoring	1,916	64.9% (+55%)
Total	2,952	100.0% (+8%)

Note: Multiple newspaper information on the same incident is counted as one incident.

As of June 15, 2006, the net number of accidents was 2,413 when duplication and unrelated information were excluded. The breakdown of the accident information by product category is shown below.

Combustion appliances ranked top, accounting for about 44% of all, an 86% increase from the previous year. The increased media exposure of accidents involving these appliances is thought to raise social awareness of product safety, and thus, urge manufacturers to report the accidents. Such exposure includes an emergency order issued in FY2005 under Article 82 of the Consumer Products Safety Law, in relation to accidents involving kerosene fan heaters; and carbon monoxide poisoning incidents caused by instant gas water heaters.

“Home electrical appliances” (36%) and “Vehicles/vehicle related products” (9%) followed; both decreased by 9% and 37% respectively.

(Table 2: FY2005 Collected accident information by product category)

	Product classification	No. of accidents	Ratio (year on year)
1	Combustion appliances	1,055	43.7% (+86%)
2	Home electrical appliances	860	35.7% (-9%)
3	Vehicles/vehicle related products	204	8.5% (-37%)
4	Furniture/home products	102	4.2% (+85%)
5	Personal products	75	3.1% (-21%)
6	Leisure products	61	2.5% (+56%)
7	Kitchen and table appliances	23	1.0% (-4%)
8	Health and sanitary products	19	0.8% (-63%)
9	Textile products	8	0.3% (100%)
10	Baby products	6	0.2% (-68%)
11	Others	0	0%
	Total	2,413	100% (+14%)

(\*Excluding duplicated or unrelated information)

### 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 FY2005, NITE conducted on-site investigations for 40 serious cases including an accidental fire caused by kerosene leaked from a kerosene water heater, and fire breaking out in the vicinity of an electric heater, etc.

NITE investigations also verified products which supposedly caused accidents in 265 cases. Such accidents include short-circuits of hair dryers' internal wiring; accidental burns caused by hot water from gas-fired bath boilers; accidental fires involving electrically heated sheets for melting

snow.

Once the manufacturer and the model are identified through investigations, NITE forwards accident information to the manufacturers, and instructs these manufacturers to submit reports on the cause of the accident and preventive measures, and further, carries out exchanges of views with the manufacturers when needed to prevent accidents from occurring or recurring.

The following chart shows the status of investigation conducted by NITE in FY2005.

On-site investigation / Accidental product	Conducted on-site investigation	40 cases
	Obtained the actual product which had caused accident	265 cases
Manufacturer of product	Identified by report from manufacturer	448 cases
	Identified through investigation by NITE	515 cases

## II. Further investigation of accidents requiring special attention

NITE adopts the system to check the investigation progress to take appropriate actions against the following accident cases: serious accidents that may cause death, severe injury and fire, frequent accidents caused by same model of products, accidents related to technical standard violation and accidents which would require strong need for preventive measures.

The following chart indicates some of the representative cases of investigations performed by NITE in FY2005, including fatal carbon monoxide poisoning cases caused by kerosene fan heaters, frequent product damages caused by electric heaters, a serious case caused by a dangling switch cord for a fluorescent light, a fire caused by the residual flames of a disposable cigarette lighter, accidental burns caused by a PET bottle fed steam humidifier, a ruptured of electric water heater, a fire from a dishwasher/drier, and a frequently occurring case involving smoke emitting from the intermediate switch of an electric foot warming table (*kotatsu*), etc.

Name of product	Investigation summary	Remedies
FF-type kerosene fan heater <Serious and frequent case>	A series of carbon monoxide incidents caused by kerosene fan heaters resulting in 2 fatalities and 7 severe/minor injuries were reported. The causes were deduced as follows: The long-term use of the heater deteriorated the surface of the secondary rubber-made air pipe, which was twisted during installation, and the structure accelerated ozone-aided oxidization in the heated environment, and eventually, cracks developed into the openings. Exhaust gas containing carbon monoxide under some conditions flowed backward and leaked through the openings.	The manufacturer recalled, withdrew, examined or repaired 25 models of products with identical configurations, and undertook to fully inform consumers of the risks in response to an emergency order issued by METI on November 29, 2005, based on Article §82 of the Consumer Product Safety Law.
Electric heater <frequent case>	A user of halogen heater noticed that the glass heater tube was whitened. When the user turned off the heater, the tube suddenly bust and burnt the carpet and floor. The accident cause was deduced to be a manufacturing failure of the glass tube due to defective materials, etc. The company could not be reached at the registered address and were later found to have been declared bankrupt by the Tokyo District Court on March 22, 2004.	The importer placed an announcement in newspapers issued on February 11, 2004 and provided inspection and repair services free of charge. Currently, the voluntary inspection and repair services have been discontinued after the Tokyo District Court declared the company bankrupt. NITE urged consumers to discontinue use of uncorrected products in NITE Alerts issued on April 28 and December 1, 2005.

<p>Lighting apparatus: Fluorescent light &lt;Serious case&gt;</p>	<p>When a child pulled the cord of the lighting apparatus, a metal part of the cord was stretched and snapped from its base and hit her right eye, damaging the lens.</p> <p>Investigations were conducted on the circumstances of the accident, structure of the attachment for the switch, design, strength against pulling force, and the number of similar accidents, etc. It was presumed that the accident was caused by the girl playing with the cord from her bed. A strong force was applied to the cord, and the s-shape metal ring attached to it was torn loose and pierced the victim's eye.</p>	<p>Although this accident might be due to insufficient supervision by the child's caregivers, the manufacturer re-designed the s-shape ring for safety so that the ring would stay on the body and only its cord would be detached when it was pulled with force.</p>
<p>Disposable cigarette lighter &lt;Serious case&gt;</p>	<p>The accident was reported as follows: a user put a disposable cigarette lighter on a bed after using it, the lighter made a clicking sound and the bedspread and spring mattress caught fire.</p> <p>The investigation revealed that the ignition lever and guide area were melted, thus the lever could not return to its original position. When NITE checked similar products with similar problems, the guides were curved or were burred. Therefore the cause of the accident was assumed as follows; the ignition lever caught on those obstacles and was prevented from returning to its original position completely, and the flame was not properly extinguished.</p>	<p>The manufacturer discontinued sales, as well as placed announcements on its website and newspapers issued on June 10, 2005, of withdrawal of the products.</p>
<p>Kerosene water heater &lt;Frequent case&gt;</p>	<p>A fire broke out at a kerosene-fired water heater placed outside a residence. It was found that the O-ring, used for sealing the outer electromagnetic pump with regulating valve, had insufficient margin for sealing size. The heat generated at the electromagnetic pump and/or the combustion heat accelerated shrinkage of the O-ring. As the sizes of parts varied, some products had inadequate sealing capability, and the leaked kerosene infiltrated the combustion chamber from the flange part of the heat exchanger, and caught fire and burned the water heater.</p>	<p>The manufacturer placed announcements in newspapers on October 24, 2002, June 2 and July 22, 2003, and offered inspections and repairs of the relevant products free of charge. As a preventive measure for O-ring deterioration, the manufacturer has replaced the NBR, the material of O-rings, with fluoro-rubber, which is deemed chemically stable, for the electromagnetic pump attached to the control valve.</p>
<p>Steam humidifier &lt;Accident requiring special attention&gt;</p>	<p>A child sustained a burnt elbow when hot water flowed out of a PET bottle fed steam humidifier which was tipped over.</p> <p>Considering that the humidifier was placed next to the pillow, and that a rollover test confirmed the structural stability of the product at 10 degrees, the accident was deduced to have been caused when the product was tipped over when the child rolled over, and consequently, hot water spilled out.</p> <p>The user manual indicates that infants</p>	<p>The importer took no measures for the following reasons; there was no other accident report of the kind; the importer had already discontinued import and sales of the concerned products; the accident was considered to be due to insufficient supervision by the caregiver.</p> <p>Additional alerts will be placed on the product, warning not to use the product on the floor.</p>

	must always be attended when using the product, and that the product should be placed on a flat space 0.5-1 meter above the floor level.	
Electric water heater <serious case>	An electric water heater burst, and the tank was blown vertically into the air, damaging the eaves of the first and second floors of a residence. The accident cause was deduced as follows; the water heater had not been used for four years and had no water supply, but the electrical supply had remained active. The residual water in the tank was decomposed by the electric current of the anticorrosion circuit, producing hydrogen gas and oxygen gas. During prolonged disuse, the volume of accumulated gas increased, and at the same time, the water level in the tank dropped, which resulted in sparks discharging between the protection electrode and the residual water, which consequently ignited gas and blew up the tank.	The manufacturer alerted consumers to exercise caution with regards to products that have not been used for extended periods through an announcement placed in newspapers on July 31, 1997. The manufacturer has also been conducting a door-to-door inspection for users of the relevant products. Since 1989, stainless steel, which requires no electrolytic protection system, has been used for these products.
Dishwasher/drier <Serious case>	An accident was reported in which a dishwasher/drier in a kitchen ignited and burned a sink and a fluorescent light. The cause of the accident was deduced as follows; water leakage from a feed water valve led to the accumulation of dirt and suds in the fan and heater area, slowing down the rotating speed of the fan. The surrounding plastics were melted by the overheated heater, and subsequently generated smoke and ignited.	The manufacturer placed an announcement in newspapers on July 10, 2003 as well as on its website, and conducted inspections and repairs free of charge. The company also reviewed the manufacturing process of the feed water valve nut, and implemented thorough checks to ensure tightening.
Electric <i>kotatsu</i> * (Intermediate switch) <Frequent case>  *Foot warming table with coverlet	While an electric <i>kotatsu</i> was in use, the intermediate switch emitted smoke, and a part of the melted back side adhered to the coverlet. The accident cause was deduced to be some excessive grease, applied to the movable parts of intermediate switches that showed poor switching action during production. The grease, reached the contact part, triggered a contact failure, and generated heat which melted the resin at the switch part.	The manufacturer placed announcements in newspapers dated April 20 and December 13, 2005, and conducted inspection/repairs of the switch free of charge. The manufacturer also provided the distributors with posters and leaflets to notify consumers of the hazard.

### 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 FY2005 are listed below.

Test case	Outline of accident and test objectives	Test results and remedies
Bicycle (foldable)	While riding a bicycle home from work, the pipe underneath the seat suddenly broke and caused the user to have an accident. NITE investigated the cause of the frame pipe breakage.	Analysis using the Finite Element Method and a fractographic study revealed that the point of fracture, a welded part, was where the stress was concentrated. Cracks were formed by external forces that further developed the fatigue damage, and consequently fractured the pipe in a relatively short time. The cause of breakage, however, was not identified in the test for there were no indications of defects (1) in material components and strength, (2) in the equivalent product when vibration tested. No significant differences were observed in welding conditions between the accident product and the equivalent.
Kerosene fan heater	A fire broke out at the air outlet of a fan heater when a user pressed the lighting button after cleaning a fan with a function contained in the product. The fire was put out by a fire extinguisher. NITE has investigated the cause.	Reproduction tests under various conditions confirmed that raw gas could come out when cleaning the heater with the fuel tank full, and the gas penetrated through the accumulated dust. The dust was confirmed to ignite when lighting in this condition, and burn with flame as in the actual accident.
Laminating machine	A user suffered sore throat and eyes when laminating for the first time after purchase in an air-conditioned 8-tatami mat sized room with a window closed. A Java sparrow was found dead about 2 meters away from the machine, and an air purifier kept operating in high power mode for several hours. NITE has collected the volatile component (VOC) diffused when using laminating machine, and investigated into the accident cause.	The diffused VOC was measured, and 27 substances were deducted. Of the substances for which indicator values are set by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW), formaldehyde, styrene and xylene were detected in relatively significant volumes. When compared, the estimate concentration was less than the MHLW values assuming that the diffusion was made evenly in a room the same size as the scene of the accident without considering ventilation. TVOC concentration was 160% of the indicator value. After aging for an hour, the volumes of the diffused substances dropped by half, and the number of substances dropped to 15. It was confirmed that the product emitted hazardous substances including formalin; however there was no definite indication of adverse health effects.
Gloves made of vinyl chloride	A user suffered allergic contact dermatitis caused by gloves made of vinyl chloride. Chemical substances were extracted from the product, and the accident cause was investigated.	Chemical substances were extracted from the products. After separation and refinement of the extracted substances, a patch test was conducted to identify the chemical structure and the name of the allergen.

PVC desk pad	Following incidents in which users suffered allergic contact dermatitis, NITE investigated the accident cause by extracting chemical substances from the PVC desk pad.	Chemical substances were extracted from the products. After separation and refinement of the extracted substances, a patch test was conducted to identify the chemical structure and the name of the allergen.
FF (Forced Flue) type kerosene fan heater	After a series of fatal and serious poisoning incident caused by carbon monoxide leaking from kerosene fan heaters, NITE investigated the causes of the carbon monoxide leaks.	During the prolonged use, cracks developed to form a hole on the flexed surface of the second air hose where stresses remained from installation. It was affected by oxidized substances in the ambient atmosphere such as ozone, and heat accelerated the reaction. The combustion exhaust containing carbon monoxide presumably flowed backward and leaked from the combustion chamber through the hole.
Hair dryer	A hair dryer emitted sparks from the air outlet, which singed some of the user's hair. NITE has investigated the accident cause.	The accident cause was deduced as follows; 1) The internal wiring contacted a heater wire. 2) The heat from the heater wire melted the insulator of the internal wiring to cause a short-circuit. 3) A part of the heater cord was blown away and burned the user's hair.

(Investigation to develop techniques for identifying causes of accidents performed in FY2005)

Theme	Investigation objectives	Summary
Verification to improve the method of discriminating short-circuit trace of electric cord	The cell size method (CS method), the estimation method that NITE developed for temperature of formation of the primary and the second short-circuit trace of electric cords, conventionally calculates the volume from the cross-section size. By this method, the calculated volumes are approximate values, thus may affect the estimation of temperature. Presented at a recent fire science and engineering conference, the accuracy would be improved by estimating the volumes by the specific gravity. NITE has verified this new method.	The investigation verified the followings; 1) The conventional method calculates the volume of short-circuit trace greater than the new method by specific gravity (SG method). 2) The SG method can measure even irregular melting traces. 3) The temperatures obtained by SG method were roughly consistent in the primary and the second estimates. The CS method is prone to underestimate temperatures. 4) The SG method is not applicable to significantly surface-oxidized traces.

## 4. Analysis of the Investigation Results and Accident Trends

### I. Analysis of 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. Further, in FY2005, a Sub-committee and the Review Group were established to thoroughly investigate the cause of specific cases.

**(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	Job descriptions
Electrical Engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 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.</li> <li>● Advising on tests conducted by NITE and evaluating the results.</li> </ul>
Mechanical Engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 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.</li> <li>● Advising on tests conducted by NITE and evaluating the results.</li> </ul>
Chemicals/Physical Impediment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Accident analysis and evaluation of investigation results / prevention measures for accidents caused by personal items such as gas lighter, and skin lesions including allergies, caused by chemicals contained in rubber gloves or clothes.</li> <li>● Evaluation of investigation results conducted by manufacturers and preventive measures. Advising on tests conducted by NITE and evaluating the results.</li> </ul>
Product Misuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Analysis of accidents allegedly caused by misuse or negligence to verify the mechanism of occurrence, current state of the products and future prospects, etc.</li> <li>● Advising on tests conducted by NITE.</li> </ul>

**(3) Sub-committee and Review Group**

In FY2005, NITE newly established a Sub-committee and a Review Group underneath it to thoroughly investigate the causes of specific cases.

In FY2005, following a series of carbon monoxide poisoning accidents involving kerosene fan heaters, the Sub-committee and the Review Group verified the risks of equivalent products, and further, of other manufacturers’ products.

**II. Results of Investigations in FY2005**

**(1) Accident Information Classified by Causes**

The table below shows accident information classified by causes for which investigations were completed in FY 2005. Investigations for 1,756 accident information cases were completed; 38 cases collected in FY2003, 865 in FY2004, 853 in FY2005.

Causes of Accidents	2003	2004	2005
Accidents Caused by Product	3	205	183
A : Accidents supposedly caused by problems of design, manufacturing process, labeling, etc.	3	173	144



B : Accidents supposedly caused by defective products, and affected by use conditions	0	15	11
C : Accidents supposedly caused by performance degradation due to extended periods after manufacturing and long duration of operation	0	17	28
Accidents not caused by products	18	440	439
D : Accidents supposedly caused by improper installation, repair work, handling during transportation, etc.	2	37	20
E : Accidents mainly due to misuse or negligence	11	376	399
F : Other accidents not caused by products	5	27	20
Accidents caused by unknown factors	17	220	231
G : Unidentified cause	17	220	231
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>865</b>	<b>853</b>

## (2) Accident Information Classified by Products and Causes

The following table shows accident information cases collected in FY2005 according to products and accident causes. “Home electrical appliances (340 cases)” was the top accident cause. 122 cases (about 36%) accounted for “Accidents caused by product”, while 103 cases were “Accidents not caused by products” which is about 30 percent of the total accidents related to “Home electrical appliances.” 83 cases or 81% of “Accidents not caused by products” were due to “Misuse or negligence”, which is about 24 percent of the total accidents related to “Home electrical appliances.” There were also 115 cases, or 34%, for which accident causes were unidentified due to lack of sufficient in-depth information.

“Combustion appliances” ranked second with 278 cases attributable to “Accidents not caused by products”, or about 85% of the total accidents of the kind (326 cases), while only 4 cases (about 1%) were “Accidents caused by products.” “Misuse or negligence (266 cases)” is the most frequent cause (96%) of “Accidents not caused by products.”

(Accident information classified by products and causes)

Note: Showing 853 cases completed in FY 2005 among 2,413 accident information collected in FY2005.

Accident cause Product	Caused by product				Not caused by product				Unidenti- fied	Total
	A	B	C	Subtotal	D	E	F	subtotal	G	
(1) Home electrical appliances	89	10	23	122	6	83	14	103	115	340
(2) Kitchen and table appliances	6	1	0	7	0	2	0	2	0	9
(3) Combustion appliances	3	0	1	4	11	266	1	278	44	326
(4) Furniture/home products	3	0	1	4	0	6	0	6	4	14
(5) Vehicle/vehicle related	18	0	0	18	3	18	2	23	51	92
(6) Personal products	16	0	1	17	0	11	0	11	7	35

(7) Health and sanitary products	1	0	0	1	0	4	0	4	1	6
(8) Leisure products	8	0	2	10	0	9		12	6	28
(9) Baby products	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
(10) Textile products	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	14	11	28	183	20	399	20	439	231	853

### (3) Injuries and Damages

The table below shows the extent of damage classified by accident causes.

Among “Accidents caused by products”, 33 cases involved bodily injuries including one serious injury but no fatalities. The serious accident involved a woman who sustained a fractured coccyx from falling on her bottom when the “folding chair” she was sitting on broke at the connection of the support pipe and the leg part. Meanwhile, there were 145 cases involving damaged properties (product breakage and extended damage) only.

146 cases of “Accidents not caused by products” involved bodily injuries including 48 severe injuries (fatalities/serious injuries) while 292 cases damaged properties only. Human injuries are mostly caused by “Misuse or negligence”, which triggered 31 fatalities and 15 serious injuries. Fatal accidents were mainly caused by; fires from “Gas cooking stoves” while cooking; fires while using “Combustion appliances” such as “Kerosene heaters”, “Electric heaters”, “Electric *kotatsu\**”, falls from “Stepladders”, while swimming with “Snorkel”, etc. Serious injuries were caused by fires while using “Kerosene heaters”, or “Electric heaters”, unfastened drawstrings of “Lighting apparatus”, prolonged skin contact with “Foot warmers”, etc.

(\*Foot warming table with coverlet)

#### (Accident information classified by injuries or damages as of June 11, 2006)

Showing 853 cases completed in FY 2005, among 2,413 accident information collected in the same year.

Accident cause Damage	Caused by product				Not caused by product				Unidenti- fied	Total
	A	B	C	Subtotal	D	E	F	Subtotal	G	
Death	0	0	0	0	0	31	2	33	23	56
Serious injury	0	0	1	1	0	15	0	15	11	27
Minor injury	29	0	3	32	4	92	2	98	40	170
Subtotal	29	0	4	33	4	138	4	146	74	253
Extended damage	65	10	12	87	10	240	13	263	105	455
Product breakage	46	0	12	58	5	21	3	29	51	138
Subtotal	111	10	24	145	15	261	16	292	156	593
No damage	4	1	0	5	1	0	0	1	1	7
Total	144	11	28	183	20	399	20	439	231	853

(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

The table below shows the extent of damage classified by product categories.

More human injuries were observed in FY2005 compared to the previous year in the product categories of “Combustion appliances”, “Home electrical appliances”, “Furniture/home products”, “Leisure products” and “Textile products.” Notably, the number of fatal accidents caused by “Combustion appliances” increased by 160% from the previous year. This is attributed to the increased number of collected fire accident information cases. Human injuries caused by fires involving “Home electrical appliances” such as “Electric heater”, “Electric *kotatsu*”, etc. increased by 95%. Also, human injuries caused by “Furniture/home appliances” increased by 139%. The increment is attributed to frequent accidents involving “Snow plows” or “Ladders” while clearing snow due to heavy snowfall in 2006. “Leisure products” resulted in a 96% increment in human injuries due to an increased number of snorkel accidents. “Textile products” also showed a substantial increment of 133% in human injuries, which is due to a series of skin lesions reported to NITE caused by “Stockings.”

#### (Accident information classified by products and damages)

Note: Showing 2,413 accident information collected in FY2005

Damage Product	Human injuries				No human injuries			Total
	Death	Serious injury	Minor injury	Subtotal	Extended damage	Product breakage	No damage	
Home electrical appliances	75 (150%)	26 (117%)	102 (65%)	203 (95%)	522 (24%)	132 (▼68%)	3 (0%)	860 (▼9%)
Kitchen and table appliances	0	1 (▼75%)	8 (33%)	9 (▼10%)	6 (200%)	7 (▼30%)	1 (▼50%)	23 (▼4%)
Combustion appliances	156 (160%)	39 (70%)	257 (90%)	452 (107%)	574 (97%)	21 (▼49%)	8 (▼53%)	1,055 (86%)
Furniture/home products	11 (267%)	45 (221%)	30 (58%)	86 (139%)	5 (▼38%)	11 (0%)	0	102 (85%)
Vehicle/vehicle related	18 (▼5%)	7 (▼63%)	46 (▼36%)	71 (▼35%)	25 (79%)	108 (▼46%)	0	204 (▼37%)
Personal products	5 (150%)	5 (▼29%)	33 (10%)	43 (10%)	16 (▼11%)	16 (▼58%)	0	75 (▼21%)
Health and sanitary products	0	2 (0%)	8 (▼58%)	10 (▼52%)	9 (125%)	0	0	19 (▼63%)
Leisure products	12 (50%)	11 (120%)	24 (118%)	47 (96%)	2 (0%)	9 (▼25%)	3 (200%)	61 (56%)
Baby products	0	0	3 (▼79%)	3 (▼79%)	1	1 (▼67%)	1 (▼50%)	6 (▼68%)
Textile products	1	0	6 (100%)	7 (133%)	0	1	0	8 (100%)
Total	278 (128%)	136 (58%)	517 (39%)	931 (61%)	1,160 (53%)	306 (▼60%)	16 (▼43%)	2,413 (14%)

\*Numbers in parentheses are year-on-year ratios.

\*\*“Serious injury” means injury requiring one month or more to heal.

\*\*“Extended damage” means property damage beyond product breakage.

#### (4) Preventive measures

The table below shows the preventive measures taken for “Accidents caused by products” out of the 1,756 accident information cases for which investigations were completed in FY2005.

Of the 391 cases of “Accidents caused by products”, preventive measures have been taken for 359 cases, or about 92 percent, by manufacturers.

The remaining 8% consist of cases for which no particular preventive measures could be implemented because manufacturers, etc, could not be identified due to fire damage, etc, and incidents caused by deteriorated products now rarely seen in market for which no other accident information has been collected.

As preventive measures, 58 manufacturers (total 209 cases) of the involved products placed company announcements in newspapers and/or on their websites, and conducted recall and 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 through their websites or posters displayed in retailers, improving manufacturing process, enhancing quality control or improving instruction manuals and labeling.

(Preventive measures taken for accidents caused by product defects)

Information Collected in	No. of accident information		
	Investigation completed in FY2005	Caused by product defect	Preventive measures taken
FY2003	38	3	2
FY2004	865	205	192
FY2005	853	183	165
Total	1,756	391	359

### III. Accident Trends over the Last Three Years

#### (1) Numbers of collected accident information by information source

The following table is the breakdown of number of the accident information cases collected by NITE in the last three years. They were; 2,124 in FY2003, 2,721 in FY2004, and 2,952 in FY2005.

The numbers of collected information cases have been increasing each year. In FY2005, information from “Press monitoring” jumped up to 1,916 from 1,237, an increase of about 55% or 679 cases from the previous year. Other increased sources are; “Local government (including fire departments)” (from 111 to 194) and “Consumer affairs centers” (from 105 to 136). On the other hand, information from “Manufacturers” dropped to 575 from 1,084, a decrease of about 47% or 509 cases.

The significant increment of information from “Press monitoring” in FY2005 is supposedly attributed to the increased media coverage on safety issues such as carbon monoxide poisoning caused by kerosene fan heaters, as well as frequent accident cases involving “Snow plows” or “Ladders” during snow removal due to heavy snowfall in 2006.

The number of information cases from “Manufacturers” in FY2005 decreased from the previous year. This is attributed to the fact that there were fewer frequent cases reported involving particular products of specific manufacturers in FY2005 compared to FY2004, when the number of accidents reported from businesses rose substantially partly due to corporate ethics being recognized as a social problem due to manufacturers hiding accidents.

(Number of collected accident information by source, as of June 15, 2006)

Information source	FY2003		FY2004		FY2005	
	No. of accidents	Component ratio	No. of accidents	Component ratio	No. of accidents	Component ratio
Manufacturers	573	27.0%	1,084	39.8%	575	19.4%
Local governments (including Fire Dept.)	122	5.7%	111	4.0%	194	6.6%
Consumer affairs centers	102	4.8%	105	3.9%	136	4.6%
National institutions	140	6.6%	80	2.9%	46	1.6%
Consumers	32	1.5%	48	1.8%	41	1.4%
Others	81	3.9%	56	2.1%	44	1.5%
Subtotal	1,050	49.5%	1,484	54.5%	1,036	35.1%
Press monitoring	1,074	50.5%	1,237	45.5%	1,916	64.9%
Total	2,124	100.0%	2,721	100.0%	2,952	100.0%

The net numbers of accidents were 1,594 in FY2003, 2,124 in FY2004 and 2,413 in FY2005 when duplications and unrelated information are excluded. (as of June 15, 2006)

In FY2005, the number of reports on “Combustion appliances” ranked top followed by “Home electrical appliances”, which had accounted for the most until FY2004. This reversal is supposedly due to increased media coverage of combustion appliance accidents in conjunction with the issuance of the emergency order by the Minister in relation to such products in FY2005.

(Number of collected accident information by product category)

Information source	FY2003		FY2004		FY2005	
	No. of accidents	Component ratio	No. of accidents	Component ratio	No. of accidents	Component ratio
Home electrical appliances	625	39.2%	944	44.4%	860	35.7%
Kitchen and table appliances	24	1.5%	24	1.1%	23	1.0%
Combustion appliances	541	33.9%	567	26.7%	1,055	43.7%
Furniture/home products	65	4.1%	55	2.6%	102	4.2%
Vehicles/vehicle related products	155	9.7%	326	15.4%	204	8.5%
Personal products	77	4.8%	95	4.5%	75	3.1%
Health and sanitary products	20	1.3%	51	2.4%	19	0.8%
Leisure products	29	1.8%	39	1.8%	61	2.5%
Baby products	49	3.1%	19	0.9%	6	0.2%
Textile products	9	0.6%	4	0.2%	8	0.3%
Others	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,594</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>2,124</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>2,413</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\*The numbers exclude duplicated or irrelevant information.

## (2) The Top 10 Items in the Last Three Years

The following table indicates the top ten items causing accidents reported in the last three years from FY2003 to FY2005. “DC (direct current) power supply equipment” was the No.1 cause of accidents in FY2003; however the number of accidents caused by such products decreased every year, down drastically from 163 in FY2003 to 45 in FY2005. This was due to the decreased number of reports of fire and smoke incidents caused by battery chargers of a particular manufacturer, whose cases accounted for 90% of accidents categorized in “DC power supply equipment.”

“Gas cooking stoves”, “Kerosene heaters”, “Electric heaters” and “Four wheel vehicles” are always in the top 5 every year, and in particular, the number of accidents caused by “Gas cooking stoves” and “Kerosene heaters” has doubled. This was due to substantially increased newspaper coverage of the products in FY2005.

On the other hand, the number of accidents concerning “Electric heaters” was nearly halved in FY2005 compared to the previous year, thanks to the reduced number of accident reports attributable to the product defects of a particular manufacturer, which was a frequent case in FY2004. Still, the number of accidents remains a little more than triple that of FY2003, and remains in the higher ranks on the list.

The greater part of accident information cases concerning “Four wheel vehicles” was related to vehicle fire.

New entries to the top 10 list are “Woodstoves” and “Wood-fired bath boilers.” This was due to the increased media coverage of these products in the same way as the above mentioned “Gas cooking stoves” and “Kerosene heaters.”

FY2003 (Total: 1,594 cases)			FY2004 (Total: 2,124 cases)			FY2005 (Total: 2,413 cases)		
Item	#of Cases	Ratio (%)	Item	#of Cases	Ratio (%)	Item	#of Cases	Ratio (%)
DC power supply equipment	163	10.2	Electric heater	348	16.4	Gas cooking stove	407	16.9
Gas cooking stove	152	9.5	Gas cooking stove	200	9.4	Kerosene heater	266	11.0
Kerosene heater	126	7.9	Bicycle	163	7.7	Electric heater	173	7.1
Four wheel vehicle	89	5.6	Kerosene heater	132	6.2	Four wheel vehicle	120	5.0
Electric heater	50	3.1	Four wheel vehicle	112	5.3	Air conditioner	50	2.1
Subtotal	580	36.3	Subtotal	955	45.0	Subtotal	1,016	42.1
Disposable cigarette lighter	47	3.0	DC power supply equipment	65	3.1	Wood stove	49	2.0
Bicycle	36	2.3	Air conditioner	63	2.9	Wiring device (extension cord)	49	2.0
Toy	34	2.1	Color TV	41	1.9	Wood bath boiler	46	2.0
Domestic wiring	29	1.8	Disposable cigarette lighter	38	1.8	DC power supply equipment	45	1.9
Wiring device (extension cord)	29	1.8	Wiring device (extension cord)	38	1.8	Kerosene fan heater	44	1.8
						Electric kotatsu*	44	1.8
Subtotal	175	11.0	Subtotal	245	11.5	Subtotal	277	11.5
Total	755	47.3	Total	1,200	56.5	Total	1,293	53.6

\*Foot warming table with a coverlet

### (3) Accident Information classified by causes

The table below shows accident information cases classified by causes in last three years.

Investigations for 4,491 accident information cases out of 6,131 have been completed. "Accidents caused by products" accounts for about 32%, or 1,457 cases, while about 44% or 1,962 cases were "Accidents not caused by products."

Meanwhile, "Problems of design, manufacturing process, labeling" accounts for about 89% of the total "Accidents caused by products" with 1,290 cases. Among "Accidents not caused by products", "Misuse or negligence" accounts for about 86%, or 1,691 cases.

In previous years, FY2003 saw more "Accidents not caused by products" (about 48%) than "Accidents caused by products" (about 29%), while in FY2004, the proportions of "Accidents caused by products" (about 40%) and "Accidents not caused by products" (about 37%) were almost equal.

Accident cause	2003	2004	2005	Total
Caused by products	458	816	183	1,457
A : Problems of design, manufacturing process, labeling, etc.	407	739	144	1,290
B : Defective products, and affected by use conditions	25	36	11	72
C : Performance degradation due to extended periods after manufacturing and long duration of operation	26	41	28	95
Not caused by products	755	768	439	1,962
D : Improper installation, repair work, handling during transportation,	58	666	20	144

etc.				
E : Misuse or negligence	637	655	399	1,691
F : Other accidents not caused by products	60	47	20	127
Caused by unknown factors	370	471	231	1,072
G : Unidentified	370	471	231	1,072
Subtotal	1,583	2,055	853	4,491
Under investigation	11	69	1,560	1,640
Total (*Number of cases which investigation completed as of June 15, 2006)	1,594	2,124	2,413	6,131

#### (4) Accident causes by product category

The three tables below show accident causes by product in FY2003, 2004 and 2005.

For accident information cases collected in FY2005, investigations have been completed for only about 35% of the total, thus in this section, accident causes are observed for those collected in FY2003 and 2004, for which investigations have been completed.

“Combustion appliances” ranked top in FY2005. According to the tables, “Accidents not caused by products” (FY2003: 440 cases, 2004: 441 cases) accounts for about 80% of total combustion appliance accidents (2003: 541, 2004: 567), and about 90% of “Accident not caused by products” was caused by “Misuse or negligence” (FY2003: 395 cases, 2004: 410 cases). Meanwhile, “Accidents caused by products” accounts for less than 1% in both 2003 and 2004 (2003: 18 cases, 2004: 28 cases).

“Home electrical appliances” ranked second. “Accidents caused by products” accounts for about 46% (289 cases) in FY2003 and 58% (551 cases) in 2004 of the total for “Home electrical appliances” (FY2003: 625, 2004: 944), while “Accidents not caused by products” accounts for about 28% (173 cases) and 20% (185 cases) respectively. FY2004 saw greater number of “Accidents caused by products.” This is attributable to increased reporting from the manufacturer for a frequent case caused by specific products of a specific manufacturer, and to corporate ethics being recognized as a social problem due manufacturers hiding accidents.

About a half of “Vehicle/vehicle related products” accidents are due to “Unidentified” causes, with 81 cases out of 155 in FY2003, and 163 cases out of 326 in 2004.

#### Accidents cause by product category (collected in FY2003\*) \*as of June 15, 2006

Accident cause Product category	Caused by product				Not caused by product				Unidentified G	Under investigation	Total
	A	B	C	subtotal	D	E	F	subtotal			
(1) Home electrical appliances	256	18	15	289	10	129	34	173	155	8	625
(2) Kitchen and table appliances	10	0	0	10	0	7	0	7	7	0	24
(3) Combustion appliances	9	0	9	18	37	395	8	440	82	1	541
(4) Furniture / home products	31	1	0	32	1	20	2	23	9	1	65
(5) Vehicle / vehicle related	21	4	0	25	10	33	6	49	81	0	155
(6) Personal products	25	1	0	26	0	22	1	23	27	1	77
(7) Health and	6	0	0	6	0	12	1	13	1	0	20

sanitary products											
(8) Leisure products	5	0	2	7	0	15	2	17	5	0	29
(9) Baby products	42	1	0	43	0	2	1	3	3	0	49
(10) Textile products	2	0	0	2	0	2	5	7	0	0	9
Total	407	25	26	458	58	637	60	755	370	11	1,594

**Accidents cause by product category (collected in FY2004\*)** \*as of June 15, 2006

Accident cause Product category	Caused by product				Not caused by product				Unidenti- fied	Under investi- gation	Total
	A	B	C	Subtotal	D	E	F	subtotal	G		
(1) Home electrical appliances	488	28	35	551	36	120	29	185	176	32	944
(2) Kitchen and table appliances	7	2	0	9	0	5	0	5	6	4	24
(3) Combustion appliances	22	0	6	28	21	410	9	441	83	16	567
(4) Furniture / home products	17	1	0	18	2	23	0	25	8	4	55
(5) Vehicle / vehicle related	97	1	0	98	7	47	4	58	163	7	325
(6) Personal products	46	2	0	48	0	24	0	23	20	3	95
(7) Health and sanitary products	37	1	0	38	0	10	0	10	2	1	51
(8) Leisure products	14	1	0	15	0	15	3	18	5	1	39
(9) Baby products	9	0	0	9	0	1	2	3	6	1	19
(10) Textile products	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	4
Total	739	36	41	816	66	655	47	768	471	69	2,124

(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

**Accidents cause by product category (collected in FY2005\*)** \*as of June 15, 2006

Accident cause	Caused by product				Not caused by product				Unidenti- fied	Under
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Product category	A	B	C	Subtotal	D	E	F	subtotal	G	investi- gation	Total
(1) Home electrical appliances	89	10	23	122	6	83	14	103	115	520	860
(2) Kitchen and table appliances	6	1	0	7	0	2	0	2	0	14	23
(3) Combustion appliances	3	0	1	4	11	266	1	278	44	729	1,055
(4) Furniture / home products	3	0	1	4	0	6	0	6	4	88	102
(5) Vehicle / vehicle related	18	0	0	18	3	18	2	23	51	112	204
(6) Personal products	16	0	1	17	0	11	0	11	7	40	75
(7) Health and sanitary products	1	0	0	1	0	4	0	4	1	13	19
(8) Leisure products	8	0	2	10	0	9	3	12	6	33	61
(9) Baby products	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	6
(10) Textile products	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7	8
Total	144	11	28	183	20	399	20	439	231	1,560	2,413

(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

The tables below show the Top 5 items for “Accidents caused by products” and “Accidents caused by misuse or negligence.”

Many of the top 5 places for “Accidents caused by products” were filled by “Home electrical appliances.” For example, “Electric heaters”, which have been listed in the top 5 for three consecutive years with a particularly strong showing in FY2004 when a specific product caused a number of accidents with as many as 292 cases reported. DC power supply equipment stands out as the battery chargers for an electric shaver, imported by a specific importer has been causing accidents (smoke/fire caused by faulty design) since 2000. The number totaled 731 cases as of July 15, 2006. There are other products on the list including “Bicycles”, “Shoes”, “Disposable cigarette lighters” and “Toys” among others.

(Top 5 Items of “accidents caused by products”)

FY2003 (458 cases)			FY2004 (816 cases)			FY2005 (183 cases)		
Item	#of Cases	Ratio (%)	Item	#of Cases	Ratio (%)	Item	#of Cases	Ratio (%)

DC power supply equipment	160	35.0	Electric heater	292	35.7	DC power supply equipment	42	22.9
Toy	32	7.0	Bicycle	65	8.0	Electric heater	11	6.0
Bicycle	18	3.9	DC power supply equipment	65	8.0	Toy	8	4.4
Electric heater	18	3.9	Shoes	26	3.2	Electric cooking stove	8	4.4
Disposal cigarette lighter	15	3.3	Tooth brush	26	3.2	Color TV set	6	3.3
Electric cooking stove	15	3.3	-			Refrigerator	6	3.3
Total	258	56.4	Total	474	58.1	Total	81	44.3

According to the Top 5 items for “Accidents caused by misuse or negligence”, shown below, “Gas cooking stoves” and “Kerosene heaters” have ranked first and second for the last three years. The number of accident information cases on these two items in particular has increased in FY2005 in comparison to the previous year.

(Top 5 Items of “accidents caused by misuse or negligence”)

FY2003 (637 cases)			FY2004 (655 cases)			FY2005 (399 cases)		
Item	#of Cases	Ratio (%)	Item	#of Cases	Ratio (%)	Item	#of Cases	Ratio (%)
Gas cooking stove	135	21.2	Gas cooking stove	180	27.5	Gas cooking stove	172	43.1
Kerosene heater	104	16.3	Kerosene heater	107	16.4	Kerosene heater	35	8.8
Electric heater	26	4.1	Electric heater	35	5.3	Electric heater	20	5.0
Four wheel vehicle	19	3.0	Four wheel vehicle	28	4.3	Four wheel vehicle	15	3.8
Domestic wiring (Extension cord)	19	3.0	Kerosene bath boiler	25	3.8	Wood fuel bath boiler	13	3.2
Total	303	47.6	Total	375	57.3	Total	255	63.9

##### (5) Accidents classified by injury or damage

The three tables below show accident information cases classified by injury or damage. NITE has collected 6,131 accident information cases in the last three years of FY2003, 2004 and 2005. Among 4,491 cases for which investigations were completed, there were 22 cases (about 0.5%) involving fatalities or serious injuries due to “Accidents caused by products”, while 291 cases (about 6.5%) were due to “Accidents not caused by products.”

Among the 291 cases of serious “Accidents not caused by products”, 265 cases were caused by “Misuse or negligence”, which accounts for the majority of human injuries. The same trend is observed each year.

(FY2003 Accident information classified by injury or damage)

Showing 1,583 cases completed by end FY 2005, among accident information collected in FY2003.

Accident cause	Caused by product				Not caused by product				Unidentified	Total
	A	B	C	Subtotal	D	E	F	Subtotal		
Death	1	0	0	1	0	66	4	70	31	102
Serious injury	9	1	0	10	4	40	6	50	21	81
Minor injury	91	0	2	93	8	188	14	210	63	366
Extended damage	212	18	13	243	26	300	28	354	163	760

Product breakage	82	5	9	96	17	38	7	62	85	243
No damage	12	1	2	15	3	5	1	9	7	31
Total	407	25	26	458	58	637	60	755	370	1,583

(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

(FY2004 Accident information classified by injuries or damages)

Showing 2,055 cases completed by end FY 2005, among accident information collected in FY2004.

Accident cause	Caused by product				Not caused by product				Unidenti- fied	Total
	A	B	C	Subtotal	D	E	F	Subtotal	G	
Death	0	0	0	0	2	76	4	82	36	118
Serious injury	8	1	1	10	1	37	3	41	30	81
Minor injury	74	6	1	81	5	178	6	189	81	351
Extended damage	146	27	22	195	32	326	23	381	161	737
Product breakage	499	2	17	518	24	33	11	68	156	742
No damage	12	0	0	12	2	5	0	7	7	26
Total	739	36	41	816	66	655	47	768	471	2,055

(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

(FY2005 Accident information classified by injuries or damages)

Showing 853 cases completed by end FY 2005, among accident information collected in FY2005.

Accident cause	Caused by product				Not caused by product				Unidenti- fied	Total
	A	B	C	Subtotal	D	E	F	Subtotal	G	
Death	0	0	0	0	0	31	2	33	23	56
Serious injury	0	0	1	1	0	15	0	15	11	27
Minor injury	29	0	3	32	4	92	2	98	40	170
Extended damage	65	10	12	87	10	240	13	262	105	455
Product breakage	46	0	12	58	5	21	3	30	51	138
No damage	4	1	0	5	1	0	0	1	1	7
Total	144	11	28	183	20	399	20	439	231	853

(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

## **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.

The NITE Alerts circulated in FY2005 include; “Accidents caused by electric heaters” and “Electric refrigerators”, “Emergency order to Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd.”, etc. Brief summaries of major alerts issued in FY2005 are shown below.

### **III. Product Safety E-mail Magazine**

NITE has been distributing bi-weekly e-mail magazines for product safety personnel since July 2005. The information is provided in a timely manner from the perspective of accident prevention; and includes safety alerts based on accident information cases collected by NITE, and information on recalls and company announcements. In addition, extra editions are issued when immediate attention is required. In FY2005, the extra issues NITE distributed include “Accidents caused by electric refrigerators”, “Emergency order to Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd.”, “Accidents caused by electric heaters”, etc.

### **IV. PR Magazine**

NITE is to launch a PR magazine “Life and Safety Journal” to provide comprehensive product safety information including efforts taken by NITE and concerned parties.

## **Accident Information “NITE Alert” Topics**

### **No.66: Accidents caused by electric heaters (carbon circle heater)**

Following accident reports that the glass heater tubes of electric (carbon circle) heaters imported by Sogo Giken Co. broke due to manufacturing defects, resulting in burnt and damaged floors or carpets; NITE conducted investigations and announced the results. The importer was offering free inspection and repair services for the product after issuing a press announcement on February 11, 2004. However, it was discovered that the importer discontinued the voluntary inspection and repair services after the company’s bankruptcy was declared by the Tokyo District Court. Following the incidence of accidents presumed to be caused by products which had not yet been inspected and repaired, NITE provided information concerning this series of accidents and alerted consumers to discontinue use of the product in order to promote consumer protection and prevent any further recurrence.

### **No.67: Accident caused by an electric refrigerator**

NITE conducted investigations after receiving an accident report on an electric refrigerator (product name: “Horei Ho-onko Duo”) imported by K.K. Sunbird Auto Denki, in which PCB conductive pattern parts caught fire due to defects in manufacturing, and made the results available to the public. The importer issued a press announcement with the distributor, K.K. AMS Corporation, and conducted a voluntary recall. However, the importer had discontinued the recall because the company filed for civil rehabilitation and became insolvent. Since the products had sections which did not meet with technical standards of electrical appliances defined under the Electrical Appliance and Material Safety Act, and in addition, there was a question on the products’ safety even when using the products according to the instruction manual, NITE provided information concerning the incident and alerted consumers in order to promote consumer protection and prevent any further recurrence.

**No.68: Emergency order issued to Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd.**

It was revealed that fan-forced heaters manufactured by Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd., between 1985 and 1992 may leak carbon monoxide. The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) issued an emergency order to the company based on Article 82 of the Consumer Product Safety Law to take necessary measures in relation to the subject products, including recalls, inspection, repairs, as well as informing consumers of the risk.

**No.69: Safety alert on electric heater (carbon electric heater) incidents**

Accidents supposedly involving the electric fan style heaters (carbon electric heater) in relation to which NITE issued NITE Alert No.66 in April 2005, to provide accident information and to call for consumers’ attention, have recurred. NITE once again urged users to immediately stop using these heaters unless they have been examined and repaired.

(Appendix) Table 1-5 Statistics of FY2005 Collected Accident Information

National Institute of Technology and Evaluation (NITE) Product Safety Technology Center, Product Safety Investigation Division E-mail: <a href="mailto:ps-news@nite.go.jp">ps-news@nite.go.jp</a>
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