

One of the most innovative areas in baby and child-care products is combining in one piece of hardware the functions that would previously have required two or more separate products. For example a cot that can be fitted with a changing table or a high chair that morphs into a baby swing. Parents are now offered 'baby transport systems' incorporating a 'seat unit in which a baby can sleep, be carried, be strapped into car or be propelled by an adult while jogging. Given the number of separate items a baby might otherwise need, parents are attracted to products that offer such a saving in floor space required. Unfortunately, in the child care product sector safety standards usually address the hazards of one or two dedicated functions. In innovative designs that are multi-purpose or incorporate additional features or actions, additional hazards may arise which will not be revealed simply by testing to the existing standards. Such products pose distributors a higher risk of facing investigation by trading standards, complaints from customers and – and potentially a major recall and/or injury liability claims.

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For example, a product that combined the functions of a reclined bouncing seat, a rocking cradle and a carry cot, introduced a route for a baby laying flat to shuffle backwards until its head dropped into a gap between the top of the seat and the sun hood, allowing the child's torso to flip over trapping its neck and suffocating it. The presumed sequence was reproduced using an appropriately weighted manikin.

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