

## New Ikea Dressers Are Designed to Reduce Tip-Over Injuries and Deaths

They hold promise, but advocates say all dressers should be designed to be safe

By Maggie Veatch  
June 05, 2019



PHOTO: IKEA

After many injuries and deaths caused by dressers that tipped over onto children, Ikea is introducing new products designed to reduce tip-over incidents. The new line, called Glesvar, will be available in stores in the U.S. and the United Kingdom starting in December 2019.

The furniture incorporates three new designs to protect against tip-overs. One has interlocking drawers that prevent multiple drawers from opening at the same time, increasing stability. The other two require anchoring furniture to a wall before they will function. Only the first variety will be available in the U.S. for the foreseeable future, Ikea says.

In recent years Ikea has come under fire for selling unstable furniture linked to the deaths of at least 10 children. While the company has recalled 17.3 million dressers, one model linked to a death, a [Hemnes eight-drawer dresser](#), is still on the market. Approximately every 20 minutes, someone in the U.S. is injured or killed when a piece of furniture, a TV, or an appliance tips over, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

### MORE ON FURNITURE TIP-OVERS

[Furniture Tip-Overs: A Hidden Hazard in Your Home](#)

[Dressers Exempt From Industry Safety Standard Fail Consumer Reports' Tests](#)

[Ikea Still Sells a Hemnes Dresser Linked to a Child's Death](#)

[How to Anchor Furniture to Help Prevent Tip-Overs](#)

[Furniture Anchors Not an Easy Fix, as Child Tip-Over Deaths Persist](#)

Ikea says it is committed to product safety. "If our vision is to create a better everyday life for people, we need to make their everyday life safer," Vladimir Brajkovic, head of product engineering at Ikea, told CR.

Consumer safety advocates are optimistic but cautious. "This is a move in the right direction, but we are urging Ikea to extend this type of thinking to its entire product line and for other manufacturers to design all dressers to be resistant to tip-overs, not just specific models," says Nancy Cowles, executive director of Kids in Danger, which has advocated for safer dressers.

Crystal Ellis, whose 2-year-old son Camden was killed by an Ikea dresser in 2014 and who is a founding member of Parents Against Tip-Overs, says that Ikea's new product line is a reminder of the risks posed by tip-overs. "After all of the deaths and injuries caused by defectively designed dressers that easily tip over," she says, "we believe this is a recognition by Ikea of this significant health risk to toddlers and other consumers."

James Dickerson, Ph.D., chief scientific officer at CR, calls the interlocking drawers a promising approach (see the video below, provided by Ikea) but worries that people may try to bypass the mechanism. And he's reserving final judgment until the dressers become available in December and CR can inspect them.

Dickerson is particularly concerned about the other new designs that require anchoring the dresser to a wall in order for it to function. In one of the designs, the drawers work only after the furniture is attached to the wall. The other design has

only two legs, in the front, requiring the back of the dresser to be mounted on a wall, according to Ikea (see the image at the top of the page).

“People buy furniture expecting that it will be sturdy and resist tipping over,” Dickerson says. “The solution is to build sturdier furniture, not to push an additional burden for safety onto consumers by requiring them to anchor.” CR continues to recommend that consumers anchor dressers to the wall while recognizing that furniture anchors are not an easy fix for many people.

Under the current voluntary industry standard, dressers are tested by placing a 50-pound weight on an open drawer while the others are closed to see whether they will stay upright. CR has urged the furniture industry to make the test more rigorous by increasing the test weight to at least 60 pounds.

Ikea had long resisted tougher standards for dressers, but Brajkovic told CR that the company now supports the 60-pound test. (CR previously tested three Ikea dressers that are already on the market, and two of them passed CR’s more rigorous 60-pound test.)

Earlier this month, Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.) introduced legislation that would require an even tougher—and mandatory—standard for dressers. Called the Stop Tip-overs of Unstable, Risky Dressers on Youth (STURDY) Act, the law would require all manufacturers to test their dressers to this higher threshold before bringing them to market. CR strongly supports the legislation.

“What we all should be working on is coming up with products that resist tipping over,” says William Wallace, manager of home and safety policy at CR. “We think the market can get there. We think it should get there. And we think it should happen now.”