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Phila. lawyer sues Mattel for Calif. family over lead

Associated Press

A family sued Mattel Inc. yesterday, claiming the world's largest toy-maker should pay for testing to determine if children have been exposed to lead from millions of recalled toys.

The lawsuit, which seeks class-action status, was filed in Los Angeles Superior Court, said attorney Jeffrey B. Killino in Philadelphia.

The complaint was brought by Adrian and Michael Powell, of Fontana, on behalf of their children, Megan and Morgan. The couple claims Mattel was negligent and should establish a fund in an unspecified amount to pay for medical screening, such as blood tests, and other monitoring.

Children who ingest lead-laced paint can suffer brain damage, but no injuries have been reported as a result of the recalled toys.

"If you put a toy with lead paint in a kid's hands, you don't think you have to pay for lead testing?" Killino said. "They need to step up to the plate and do the right thing."

A call to El Segundo-based Mattel was not immediately returned. The company previously said it had increased its monitoring of Chinese factories.

Last week, Mattel announced a worldwide recall of almost 19 million items, including dolls, cars and action figures. Some of the items were con-

taminated with lead paint. Others had small magnets that children might swallow.

That followed the company's previous recall of 1.5 million Chinese-made toys from its Fisher-Price unit because of possible lead-paint hazards.

According to the lawsuit, the Powell children played with some of the toys on Mattel's recall list. The children had not exhibited any signs of illness, Killino said.

"Lead poisoning, unless it gets really severe, the signs and symptoms are often difficult to pick up on," he said. "That's why we need the blood test."

Mattel shares rose 31 cents, or just over 1 percent, to \$22.56 yesterday.

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