

JAPAN CONSUMER INFORMATION CENTER

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Product Test: APS Compact

1. What is an “APS Compact Camera”?

An APS camera is the one which has coped with the new photographic system of “APS(=Advanced Photo System), put on sale in April, 1996. The shipping numbers of various compact cameras in the domestic markets are: 2,080,000 for the conventional 35mm-film compact camera; and 1,490,000 for this new APS camera. The share of the APS camera is above the ratio of 40% of all.

APS cameras will be completed as a perfect system by not only cameras but also films, developing equipment, and laboratories prepared. Since the film used in this system is a cartridge-film of 24mm and is smaller than the conventional 35mm film, the camera body with the 24mm-film will tend to be more compact compared with the conventional type. While taking a picture, a lot of information, which will be used in the laboratory for printing, is recorded into this film. The film-loading is very easy thanks to this cartridge system. Furthermore, the MRC(Mid-Roll-Change) function –that is, to be able to exchange a film even in its halfway usage – can be pointed out as one of APS camera's special features. This time, 5 brands of APS compact cameras, as well as one brand



of conventional 35mm-filmed camera for reference purpose, are picked up for the comparison testing.

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2. Performance

Films of the APS system are small with the width of 24mm. Therefore many of its camera bodies are also compact and suitable to carry. However, since its photographing size framed on the film is smaller than the conventional 35mm-films, there will be a difference in its finishing if enlarged, while there will not be recognized any particular difference at normal printing size. Compared between pictures taken by the APS camera's and the 35mm's, both being enlarged to the A4 size, conventional type was superior to the APS camera's in both quality and stereoscopic outlook.

As for the performance of finder, the most important matter to check is the ratio of the field of vision seen through finder to the actual photographing part on the film. Usually the standard of this ratio, called "the ratio of the field of vision through finder", should be above 80% through 90%. However, under the product test, we got to know that many of those cameras had the ratio under 80%, and the subjects tended to be printed smaller than expected as a result.

The exposure performance was not so good, so it sometimes happened that the edge part of a picture was darker than the central.

3. APS Function

In the PQI (=Print Quality Improvement), as one of the APS functions, an APS camera can record photographing information into the film so as to make use of it later for retouching work in the printing laboratory. Even though all brands had this function, there were just little explanations on what kind of information could be recorded into by each brand on any catalogues or manuals. So we made an inquiry to each manufacturing company, and have known that

the contents of written information are different by each brand, even if they are all APS cameras!

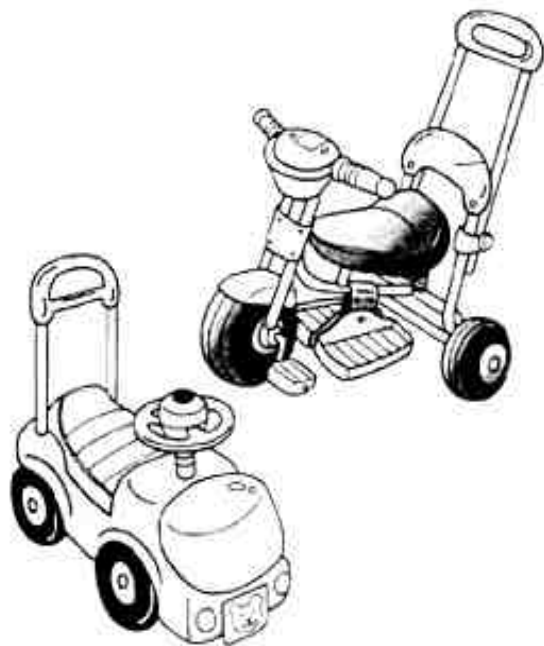
4. Usability

There was a difference in the usability of half-click of the shutter, the indication of picturing mode, and the visibility of the self-timer-signal.

5. Purchasing Advice (or Buying Tips)

Since some of APS brands do not yet cope with APS-title function or MRC function though using the system-name of "APS", you'd better make a good confirmation by catalogues or at stores before purchasing. Furthermore, when printing, you should be careful because the operating system against APS differs in each laboratory.

Warning! Injuries by Infant's Automobiles and Velocipedes



Playing automobiles and velocipedes for infants are popular among small children. But on the other hand, it has been reported to JCIC Consumer Injury Information System that as many as 127 cases(62 cases by the infant's automobiles, 65 cases by velocipedes) of children's injuries occurred by playing with the above vehicles during August 1992 through September 1999. Many of the cases are bruise on the head by tumbling.

1. What is an infant's automobile and velocipede?

"Infant's automobile" is a four-wheeled playing vehicle with a shape of miniature automobile. Most popular models are the one where an infant straddles and makes it run by kicking the ground. Many of them have a "handrail" to push on from the back. Covered age: from under one year toward about five years old.

"Infant's velocipede" is a so-called velocipede for infants to play with. Some of them have a "leaning backboard", and others have a "handrail" so that parents can push forward the vehicle with the infant sitting on it. Covered age: from about one and a half year toward four years old.

2. Details of Injury Cases

By distinction of sex, boys are more apt to be injured than girls. By ages, around one-to-three years are most dominant.

As for the ratio by age construction, the sum of one-year-old(37 infants), two-years-old(48 infants), and three-years-old(23 infants) account for 80% of all.

Looking over the sorts of injury, the number of "bruise and abrasion" is the most frequent(104 cases), and the next is "stab and cut"(13 cases), and the third is



"fracture of a bone" (5 cases).

As for the injured parts, the overwhelming part is around and above the head (107 cases = 84.3%).

Out of the 119 cases whose degree of injury are recognized, 111 cases are a slight injury, although the other 8 cases are medium-degree (the degree which is not fatal but required for hospitalization). The 68(accounting for 57.1%) cases do not need hospitalization but need to attend a hospital.

3. The Result of the Tumble Test

Since many injured cases were caused by falling down backward tumble, we executed a tumble test. A two-years-old infant dummy (about 12 kg weight) was put on a well-sold model vehicle with a leaning backboard or a handrail to push on from the back; then pull the leaning backboard or handrail backward on the inclined floors at each angle of 0 degree, 5 degree, and 10 degree, with the back-wheels locked.

As a result of those tests, it was known that the forward-wheels would float off the ground with a force lighter than the dummy's weight, not only on the

slope but also on the flat floor. The infant's automobiles tended to make the forward-wheels off from the ground more easily with just a tiny force compared to the velocipedes, because their body-weights are so light.

4 . Purchasing Advice

1) When you choose the commodity:

In Japan, commodities approved for safety by *Consumer Product Safety Association(CPSA)* are marked with "SG" and by *the Japan Toy Association* are marked with "ST". If personal accidents are brought out by any defects of these commodities with the above marks in their normal usage, compensation

limited to ¥100 million is guaranteed per one sufferer. Therefore, we can advice you as one of countermeasures to choose commodities with the above in order to avoid troubles.

2) Before Playing

As for knockdown-goods, assemble them correctly according to an explanatory note. Even when you order some ready-made commodity, check it elaborately to confirm no defects in its outside appearance or in its assembly. Also read directions well to abide by the way of use / limitation of weight, and so on.

3) In Playing

a) Be careful so that your child may not lean against or rest the weight on the leaning backboard or the handrail.

b) Adults around children had better keep a watchful eye on them because they will be tumbled with just a tiny force.

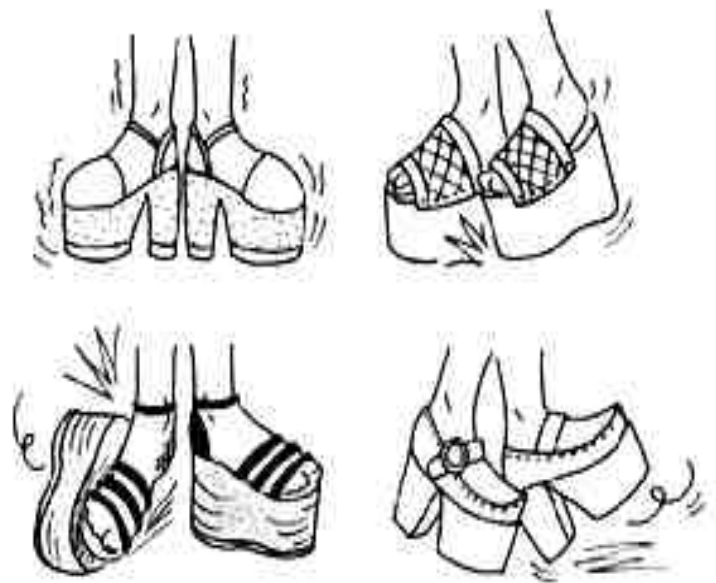
c) Never let them play around places with a difference in level or slopes.

5. Request for the Industry

JCIC has made the following three requests to the industry's referential groups, etc: 1) To make a stable design which does not easily tumble backward for infants' safety; 2) To make understandable directions which is easy to keep in service (some of the directions are indicated only on packages which may be thrown away after pulling out the commodity); 3) To set a standard corresponding to the market's status quo (especially for safety, to make a quick response toward the market's trend).

Under the Vogue:

Rapid Increase of Accidents Caused by " Shoes with Thick Sole."



As a recent fashion, shoes with very thick soles and high heels, for example a sole as thick as 5cm from its tiptoe, or a heel as high as 15cm, are popular among Japanese young women. However, despite such popularity, there have been occurring several serious

injuries such as sprain or fracture.

Those accidents by “shoes with thick soles” are getting to account for high ratio of all the cases of accidents caused by the lady- shoes. The sorts of injury are deeply relevant to the shape of the shoes; the occurrence ratio of “abrasion, sprain, bruise” and “dislocation, wrench” and “fracture”, whose occurrence ratio is also higher among ordinary shoes-relevant injuries, is higher than others.

There are many cases that shoes with thick soles are apt to tumble/fall down at a little difference in level/ordinary stairs even on a flat road. A surgeon says, “Since shoes with thick soles make light of the function necessary for normal walking, and furthermore lack stability, they tend to become the cause of sprains or tumbles. Therefore the shoes themselves may become the cause of various pains in the leg or diseases. Teenagers, the main user of this fashion, who are in their growing age, with tender bones and joints, are seriously apt to suffer from sprains.”

JCIC Consumer Forum Held

On Dec.6th/7th of 1999, “JCIC Consumer Forum” was held for the fiscal year of 1999 under the theme that “With the Aim of Realizing Consumer Sovereignty –the Role and the Direction of Consumer Activities“.

On the 1st day of the forum, the total 43 of individuals and groups attending to the consumer activities all over the country were divided into five sectional committee meetings to report on their activities/surveys. Titles of each sectional committee meeting are as follows: the 1st sectional committee

meeting: “Consumer Rights and the Society Participated by Citizens”, the 2nd sectional committee meeting: “Various Consumer Contracts and the Consumer Life in the Future”, the 3rd sectional committee meeting: “Thinking of Our Living Environment Concerning Children and Young People”, the 4th sectional committee meeting: “To Realize the Circulating Society”, and the 5th sectional committee meeting: Looking on the Regional Conservation of Nature/Environment”.

On the 2nd day, a general meeting was held. It started with the keynote speech of Dr. Masakazu Yamazaki, a dramatist and the professor of the graduate school of Toa University, and after that was a panel discussion participated by him, Ms. Hatsuko Yoshioka (the secretary general of Housewives Association), Mr.Takafumi Kaneko(the director-general of Social Policy Bureau at the Economic Planning Agency), and Ms. Kuniko Inokuchi(the professor of the law dept. at Sophia University).

List of Product Tests in FY 1999

JSIC carried out comparative tests for 12 product items during FY 1999. The results and findings from these product tests were announced in a monthly magazine, “Tashikaname”(Critical Eyes).

Product Items Tested in FY 1999

Date of release	Tested products
1999. Apr.	Refrigerators
May	Polishes for automobiles
Jun.	Compact fluorescent lamps(Energy saving light bulbs with lamp cap)
Jul.	New types of vegetable oil that claim to be weak-smelling or cook with as half amount as normal type of oils
Aug.	Yoghourts that claim to be “low sugar” and/or “low fat”
Sep.	Women’s stretchy pants intertwined with polyurethane fibers
Oct.	Surface flash of clothing
Nov.	Household body fat tester
Dec.	DVD Car navigation systems
2000. Jan.	APS Compact camera
Feb.	Clothing including rayon
Mar.	Mini-sized motor vehicles to meet the new standard

The Japan Consumer Information Center (Kokumin Seikatsu Center) is a government-affiliated organization for consumer protection, which has 130 staff members. The main activities are consumer education, consumer consultation, research and product testing.

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