Product Recall Bulletin

Q3. October 2023

RQA

Your product risk experts.

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Food recalls in US, Canada, UK, EU and Australia

Data in all graphs for 2023 show an estimate for the full year by extrapolating January – September numbers.

Key take-aways

- In September, 33 days was the average time it took between initiation of a recall by the company and the FDA Center Classification Date. Why does it take the FDA so long to classify recalls as I, II, or III after the initiation of the recall?
- Recalls involving a greater number of products. On average, in 2023, each FDA recall event involves 4 different product types; the highest this has been since 2017.
- Allergens are almost always the top cause of food recall.
- The USDA / FSIS have already reported more recalls in 2023 than in all of 2022.
- 50% of FDA recalls (and over 35% of UK FSA recalls) are classed as Never Events; e.g. wrong product / wrong label.

Top Causes of Recall with FDA, FSA and Canada

RQA Group analysis of data across FSA, FDA and Canadian food recall causes show that allergens dominate the causes of food recalls closely followed by microbiological contamination.

Top 5 Recall Causes	FDA	FSA	Canada
Allergens	1st	1st	2nd
Microbiology	2nd	3rd	1st
Foreign body	3rd	2nd	4th
Unsanitary conditions	4th	*	*
Labelling error - non allergen related	5th	*	3rd

*not in top 5 recall causes

Note, the agency data has been categorised by RQA Group for ease of comparison using publicly available information to standardise across these agencies as far as is possible.

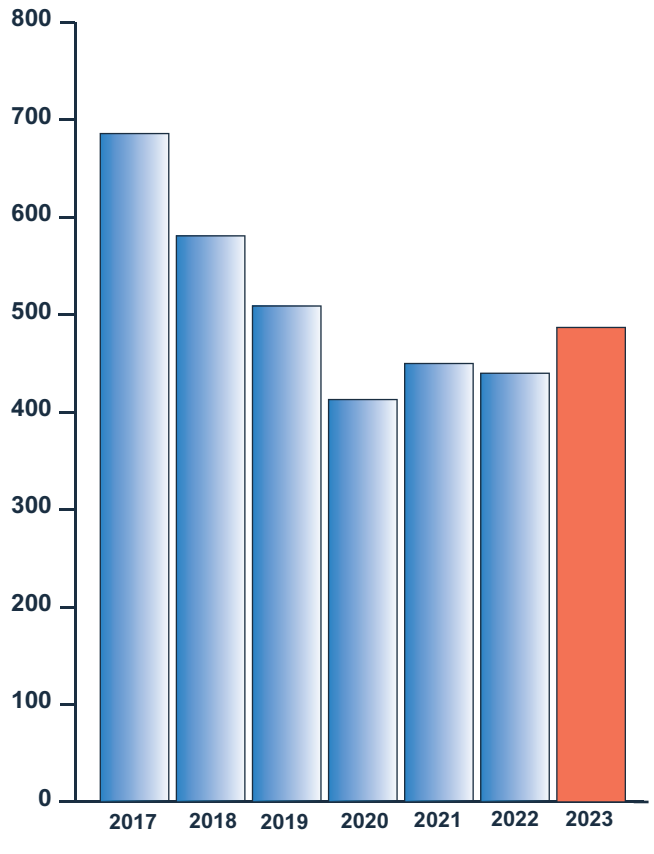
FDA Recalls - Product Category Standings

- Confectionery are the most recalled product category in 2022 and so far in 2023. Over half of the confectionery products were recalled due to an allergen related labelling errors.

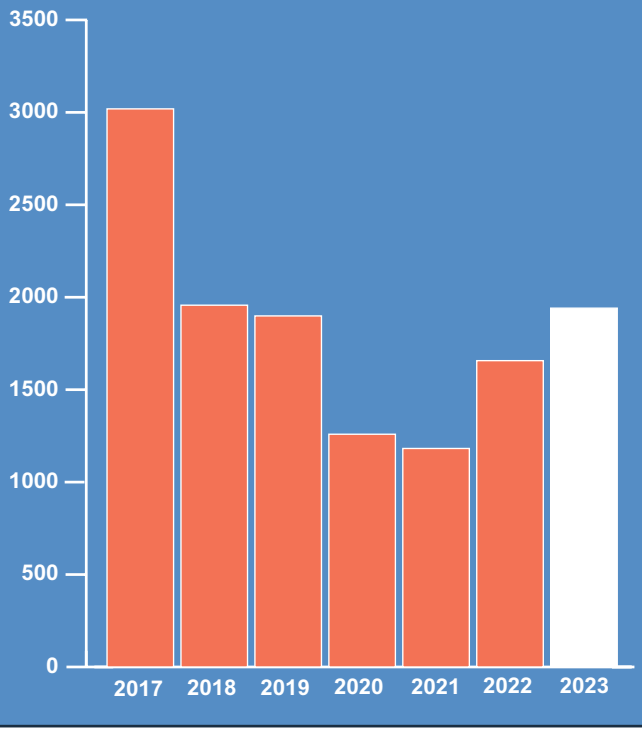
Product type	2023 position	2022 position	Change from 2022
Confectionery	1	1	NO CHANGE
Cereals & Bakery	2	4	UP
Prepared dishes, pasta, noodles	3	7	UP
Fruit & Veg	4	2	DOWN
Nuts, Seeds & Snacks	5	5	NO CHANGE
Herbs & Spices	6	12	UP
Nutritional products	7	3	DOWN

Number of US FDA Food Recall Events

- The number of different FDA recall events continues to increase and could return to pre pandemic 2019 levels, if this trend continues.

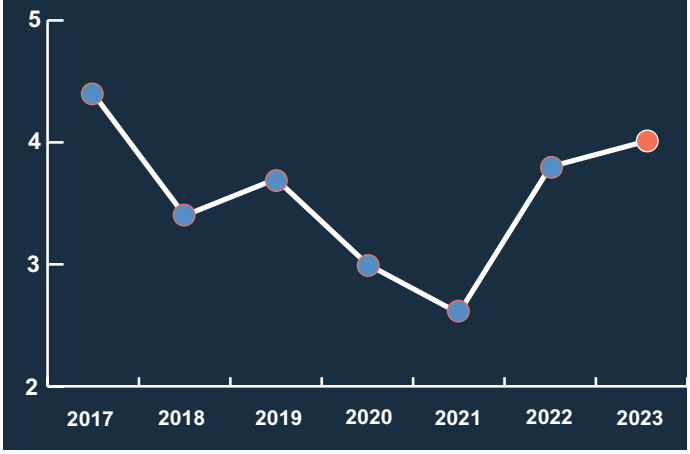


Different Food Products Recalled - FDA



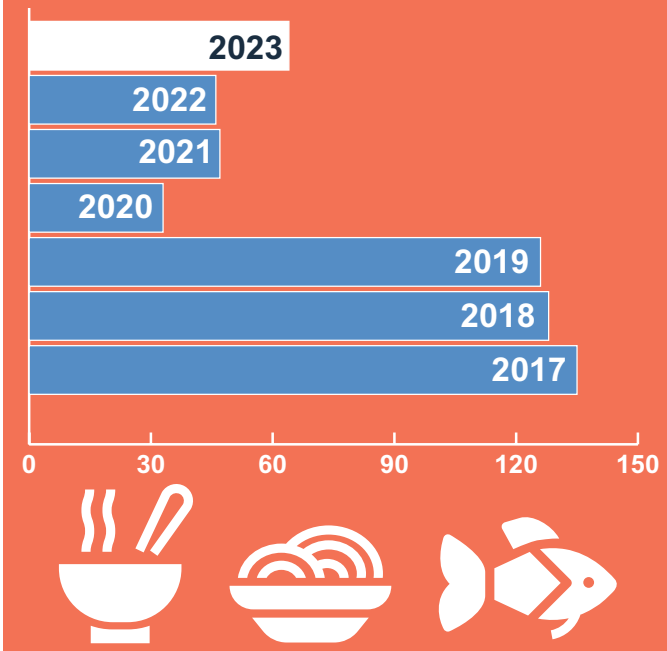
Average Number of Different Products Recalled Per Event

For each FDA recall event there may be multiple different products listed. A recall event could include only one product, or in extreme cases, it can include over a hundred. If we look at the average number of different products listed per recall event (chart below), we can see that it has reached the highest level since 2017. This shows that not only are recall events increasing, but that on average they are involving a wider range of products.



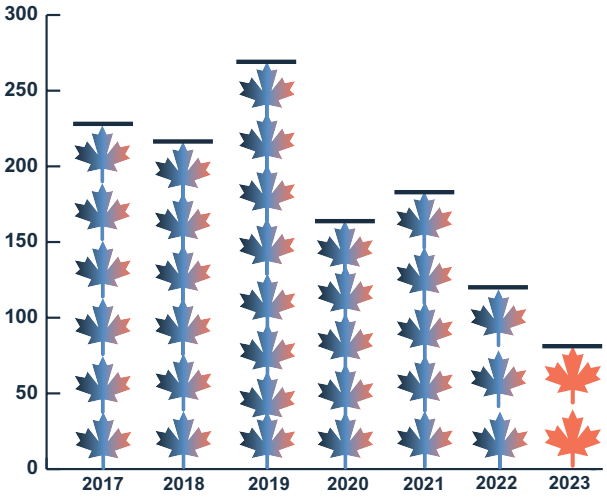
USDA FSIS Food Recalls (Class, I, II or III)

- The 10 USDA / FSIS recalls reported in June was the highest number in a single month since before the pandemic in November 2019.
- There were 30 recalls in H1 2023. Whilst still low numbers this is the most in the first half of a year since 2019.



Canada Food Recalls

The number of Canada food recalls in 2023 is looking like it will be the fewest in any of the past 7 years. Of the 2023 recalls, over 35% are due to allergen issues and listeria contamination is the cause of 30% of them.

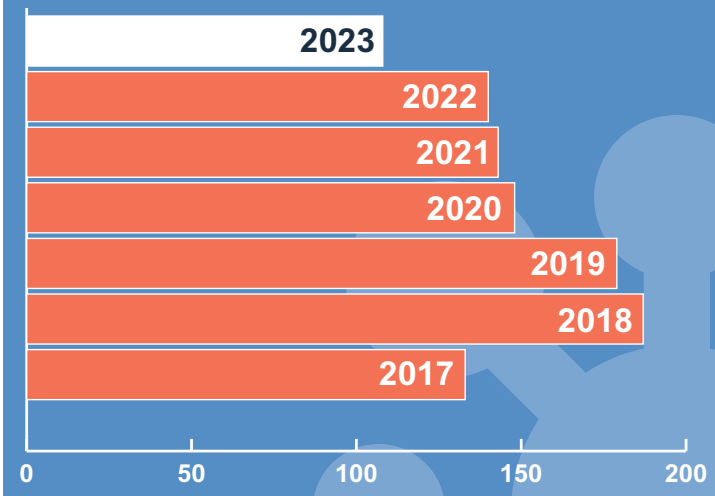


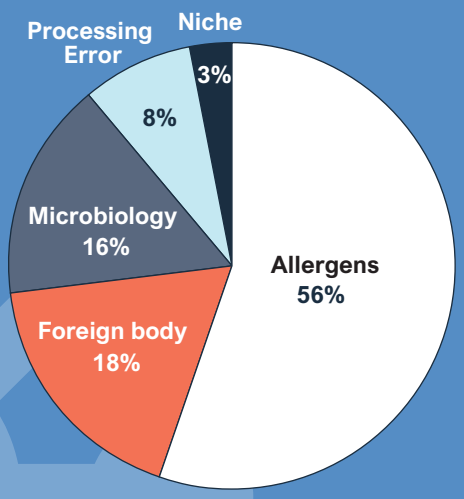
Product Category*	Rank
Dairy	1
Confectionery	=2
Fruit & Veg	=2
Non Alcoholic Beverages	4
Prepared dishes, pasta, noodles	=5
Soups, Broths, Sauces & Condiments	=5
Nuts, Seeds & Snacks	7

* Product categories prescribed by RQA Group for ease of comparison

UK FSA Food and Allergy Alerts

UK FSA recall numbers are looking like they will be the lowest in 2023 than since before 2017.



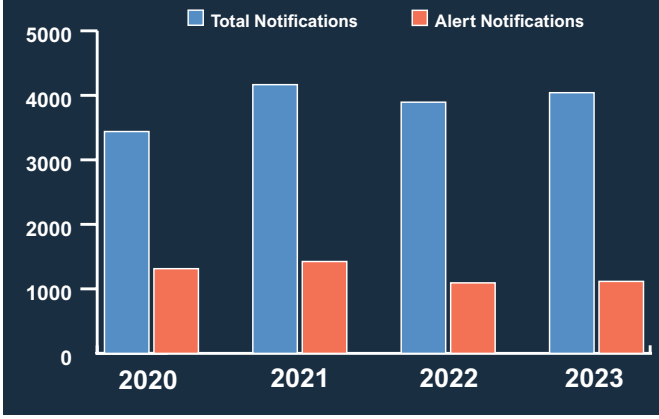


- Allergen contamination and allergen labelling issues are the cause of 55 % of UK food recalls.
- Never Event mis-labelling recalls account for over 35% of UK food recalls in 2023. This is actually a bit lower than previous years.
- Confectionery, prepared dishes and soups & sauces are the three most recalled food categories.

Product Category	%
Confectionery	27%
Prepared dishes, pasta, noodles	23%
Soups, Broths, Sauces & Condiments	10%
Dairy	9%
Cereals & Bakery	7%
Meat and meat products (other than poultry)	6%
Nuts, Seeds & Snacks	6%

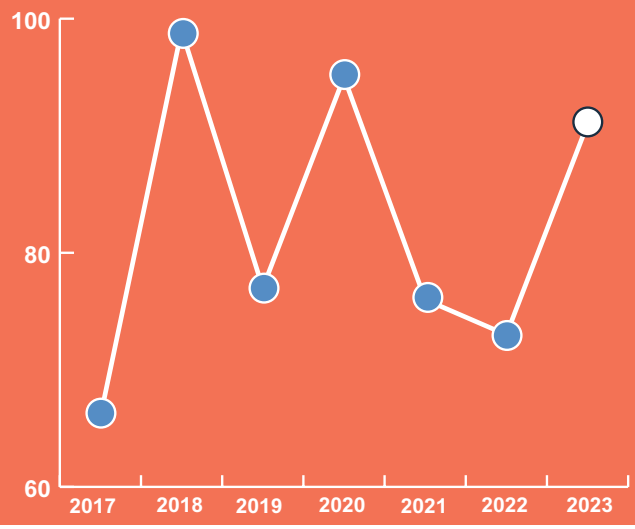
EU RASFF Food Notifications

EU RASFF data suggests 2023 could be a year with one of the highest number of total food notifications, predicted to reach almost back up to 2021 levels. Alert notifications will be in excess of 1000 in 2023. These represent serious health risks and so require urgent market action.



Food & Grocery Recalls - Australia

Australia recalls are on the increase as we progress through 2023 and now look to be close to 2020 levels again by year end which was one of the highest in recent years.

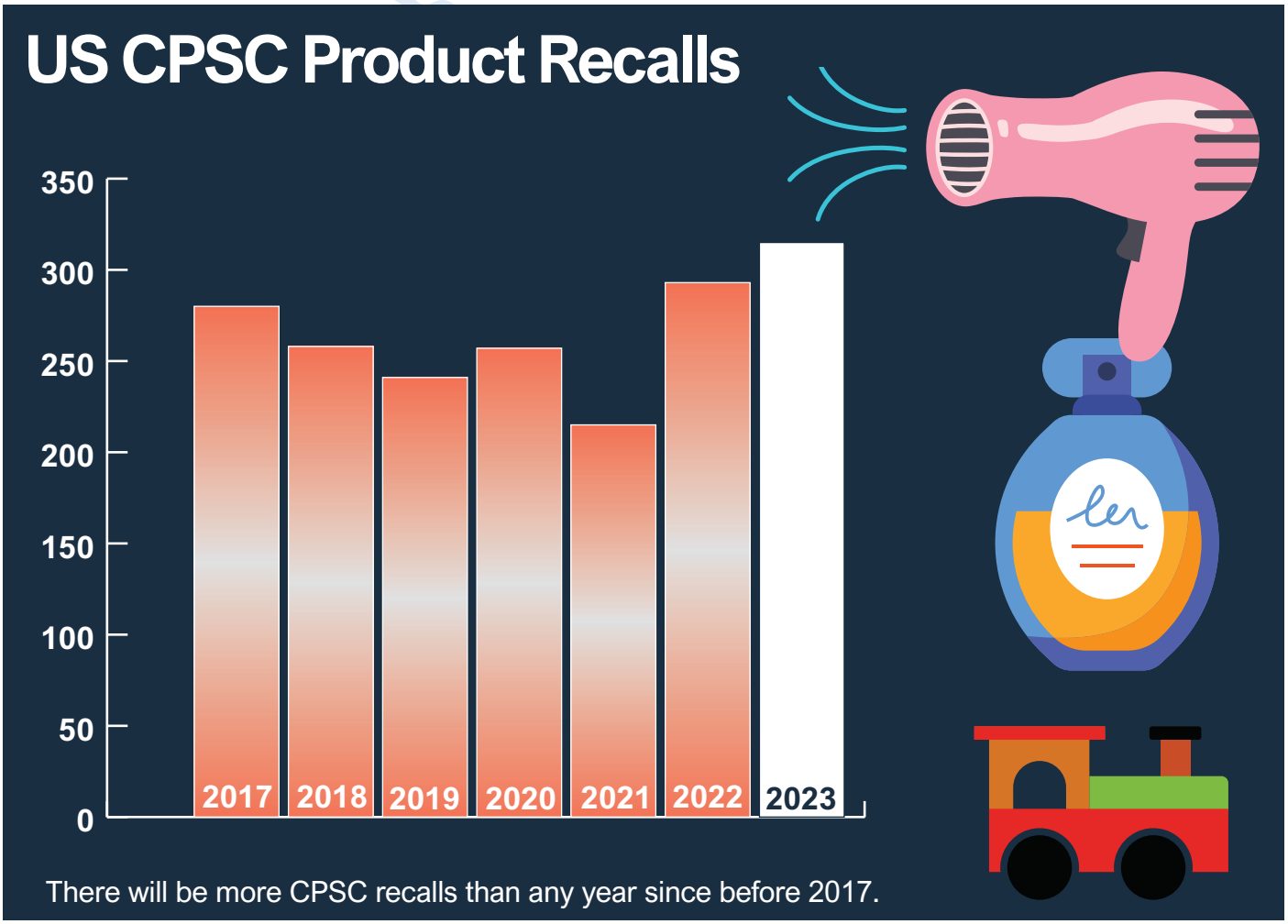


Consumer Products & Automotive Recalls in US, Canada, UK, EU and Australia

All graphs are extrapolated from H1 2023 data, to give an estimate for the full year.

Consumer Products

US CPSC Product Recalls



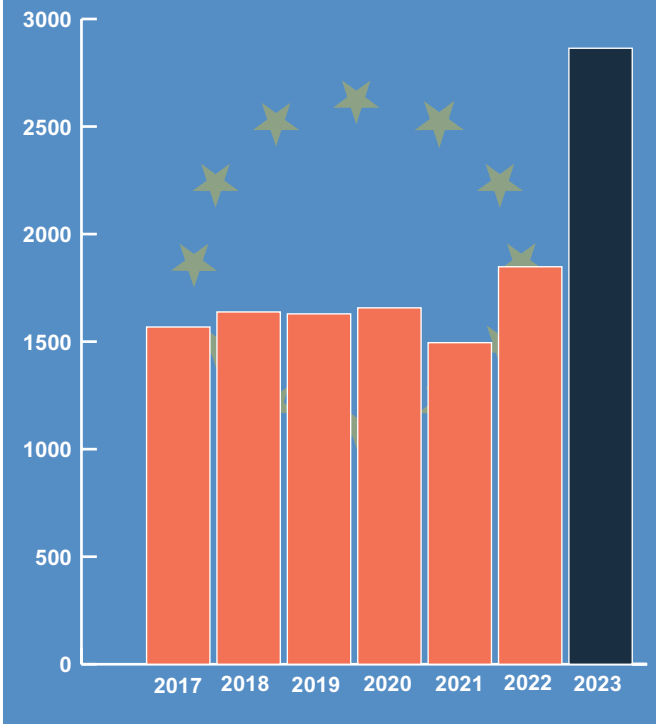
There will be more CPSC recalls than any year since before 2017.

Watch this space: In RQA's 2023 full year recall report, published in January 2024, we will include an analysis of the products and causes of these CPSC recalls.

EU Non Food Notifications

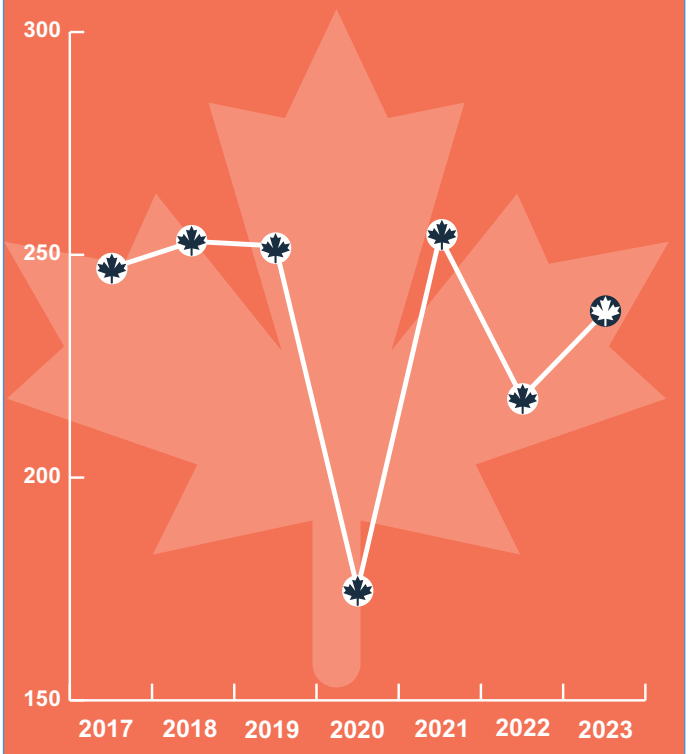
Excluding Automotive

EU Safety Gate notifications (excluding automotive) are expected to increase by over 50% compared to last year.



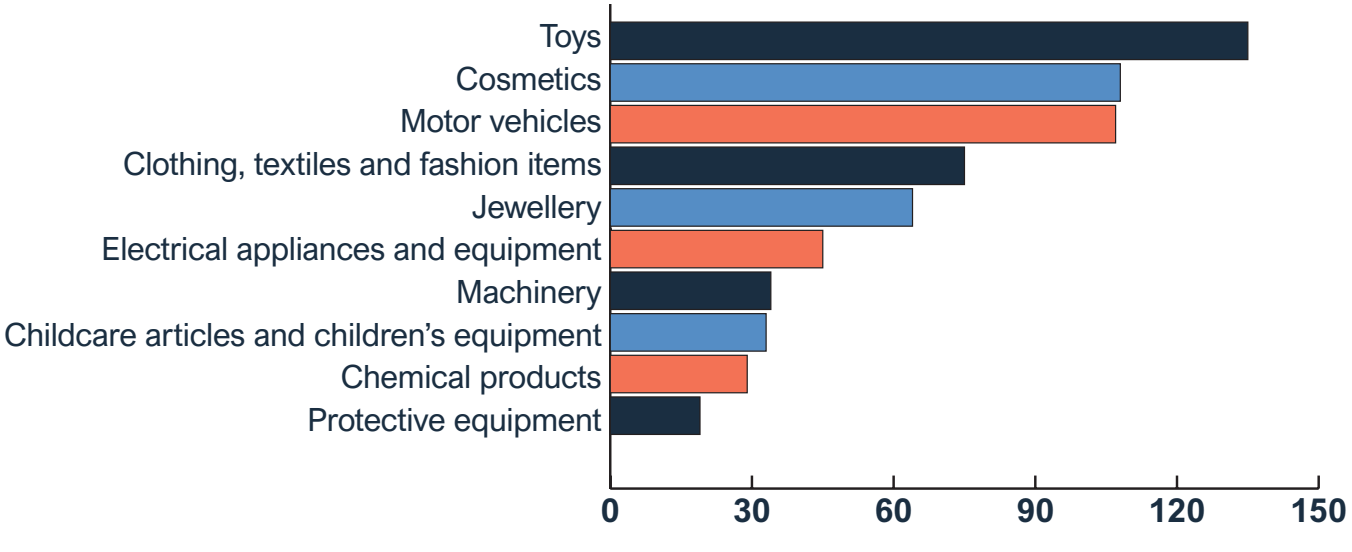
The top consumer product categories are shown below; cosmetics being the category with most notifications.

Number of Consumer Product Recalls (Canada)



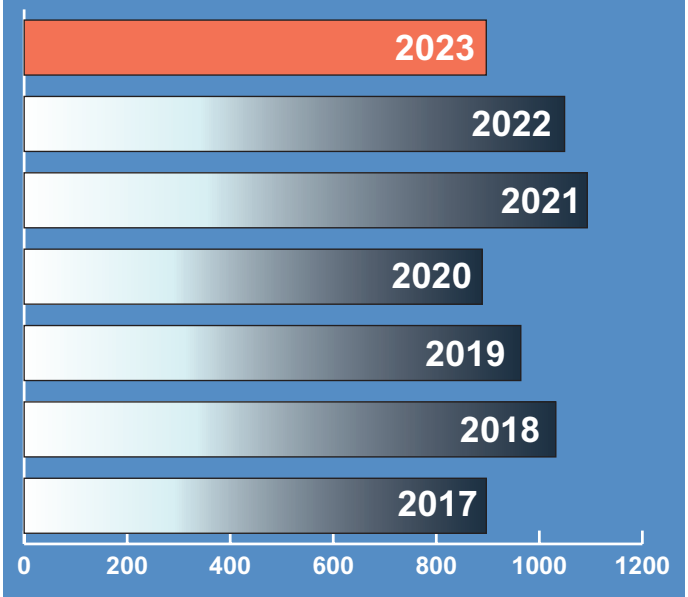
Canadian recalls of consumer products are expected to be higher than 2022. Apart from 2020 (in the peak of the pandemic), Canadian consumer product recall numbers remain reasonably level, year on year.

EU Safety Gate - Top 10 Recalled Categories

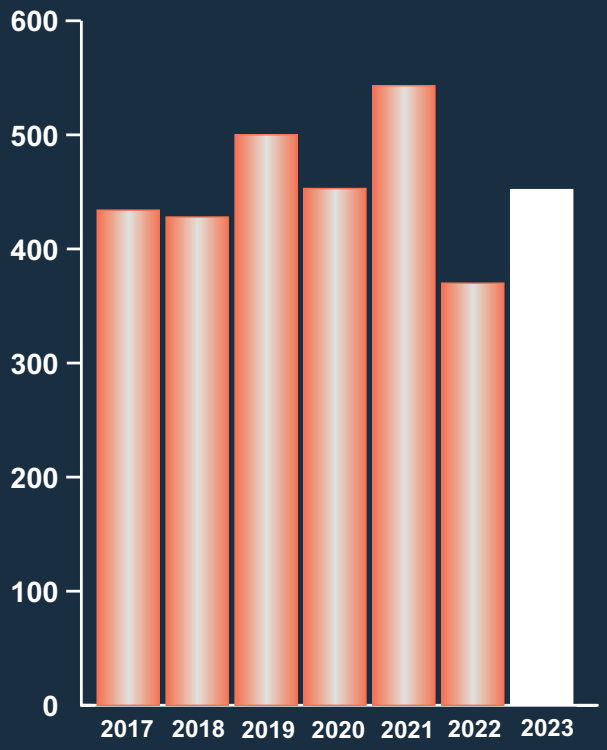


Automotive

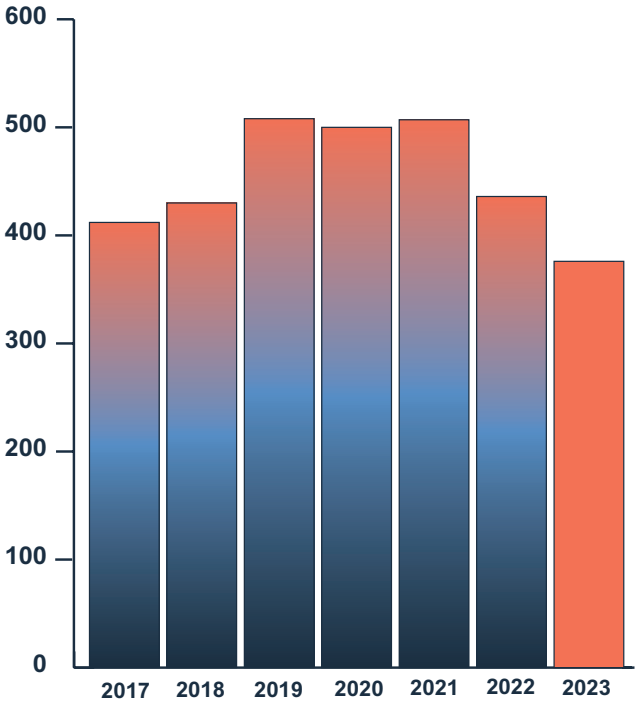
NHTSA Safety issues - recall



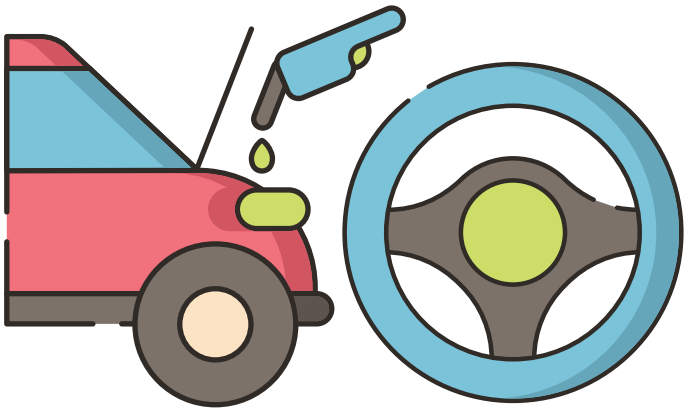
EU Safety Gate - Motor Vehicles Recalls



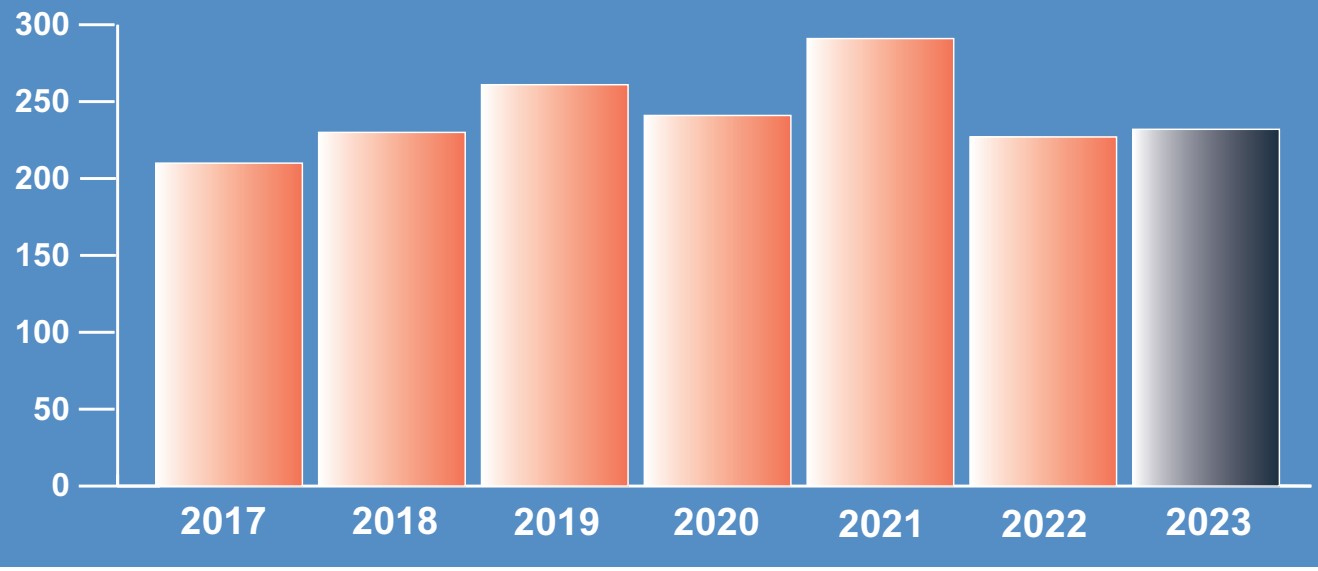
UK DVSA - Vehicle and Equipment Recalls by Event



Note, this data is reported by unique event ID occurrence and does not count total number of recalls published (e.g. where recalls are expanded or amended this would not change the count in the numbers shown)

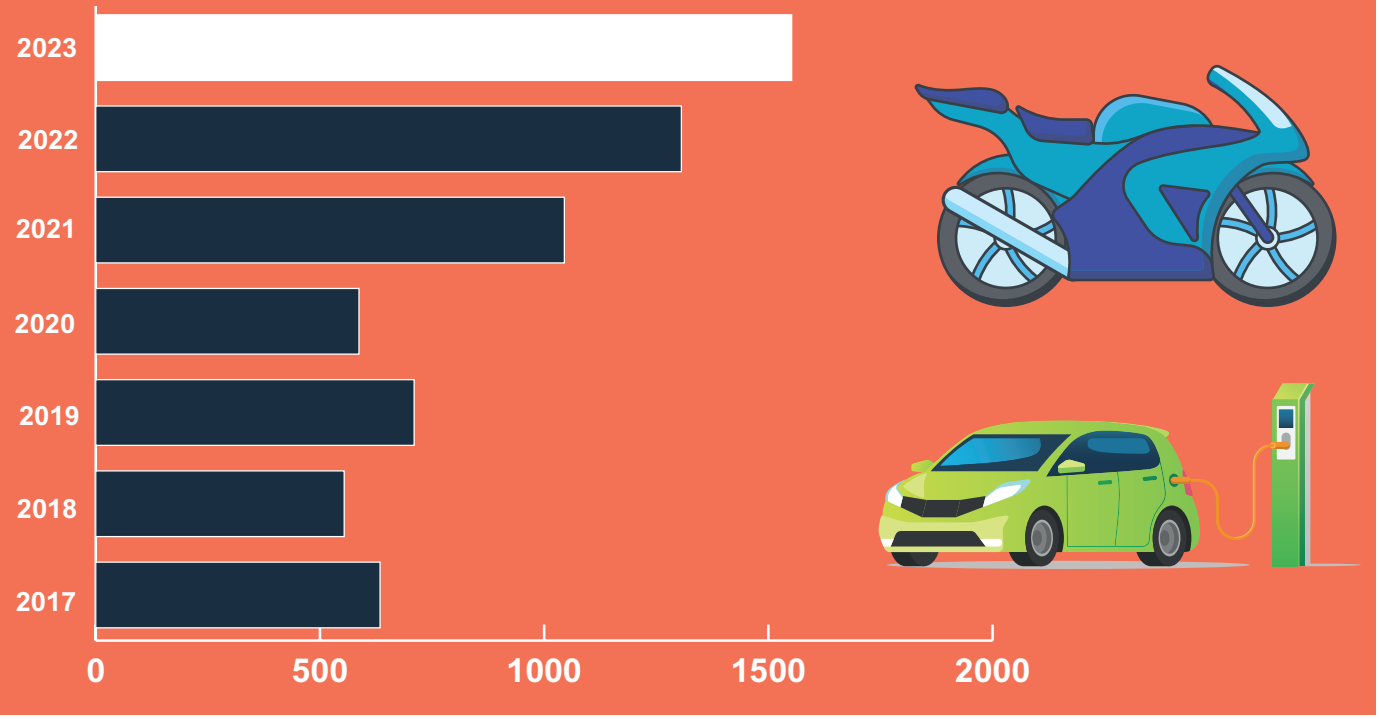


Vehicle Recalls Australia 2017-2023



- Automotive recalls reported by NHTSA, UK and Australia all look like being lower than the recent peak year of 2021.
- Canadian vehicle recalls in 2023 look like they will be significantly higher than previous years.
- EU Safety Gate Automotive recalls are likely to be up on 2022, but quite a lot lower than the recent peak in 2021.

Canada Vehicle Recalls



We hope you have found this bulletin useful and interesting, please let us know if there is any data that you would like to see in the next bulletin and we will do our best to incorporate this.

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