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Jury being chosen in bike injury case

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Jury selection began Wednesday in a personal injury case against national retailer Wal-Mart Stores Inc. and a San Rafael-based bicycle distributor.

The civil lawsuit was filed by San Francisco attorney Mark Webb, a Sausalito resident, on behalf of 10 families who claim their children were injured while riding bikes they had purchased at Wal-Mart stores.

Dynacraft Industries Inc. imports millions of the bikes a year and sells them to the Wal-Mart chain.

The lawsuit, filed Feb. 14 in Marin Superior Court, alleges that the two companies knew the bikes had defects that could cause the front wheel to fall off while in use.

Judge Michael Dufficy, in a brief overview of the lawsuit, said the alleged victims were riding their bicycles when the equipment came apart. The riders were thrown over the handle bars, he said.

All of the bikes involved carry the "Next" brand name and have a quick-release front wheels, the lawsuit claims.

Lawyers for Dynacraft argued before the arrival of potential jurors that the number of claims filed for injuries was minor compared to the number of bikes that were sold.

The proceeding is expected to continue today.