



Parent Plus, Adolescent Health/Medicine, Injury, Violence & Poison Prevention

Parent Plus: Injuries, fires prompt warnings about hoverboards

by Trisha Koriath, Staff Writer

If you recently bought your child a hoverboard or he received one as a gift, be aware that the two-wheeled, motorized boards can catch fire. Riders also can be seriously injured if they fall off the board or in collisions.

Some models have caught fire while their batteries were being charged, and others ignited while in use, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). The government agency is looking into why the fires started.

The CPSC also has received dozens of reports from hospital emergency departments about injuries to hoverboard riders. Some of the injuries include concussions, broken bones, bruises, cuts and internal organ injuries.



Hoverboard riders can be seriously injured if they fall off the board or in collisions.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) does not support allowing children under age 16 to operate unlicensed motorized wheeled vehicles. Experts from the AAP are concerned about the safety of hoverboards and are studying the number and type of injuries they cause. A survey of 10 health care facilities showed that between Christmas and New Year's Day, more than 100 children sought treatment for a broken arm or leg after falling off hoverboards. About 20% of the injuries required surgery.

In December, a teen in the United Kingdom was killed after falling off a hoverboard in front of a bus.

CPSC advises riders of hoverboards to:

- charge and store in an open dry area away from items that can catch fire;
- let the device cool for an hour after riding before charging;
- keep an eye on the board while it is charging (do not charge overnight);
- wear the same safety gear that you would wear when riding a skateboard: a skateboard helmet, knee and elbow pads, and wrist guards; and
- avoid riding near traffic.

The safety problems with the boards prompted laws to be enacted this year. In California, riders must wear a safety helmet and be at least 16 years old. In New York City, hoverboards are illegal. Riders in all states should



THE OFFICIAL NEWSMAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS

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check local ordinances to determine where the boards are allowed. Because they are unregistered motorized vehicles, hoverboards are banned from many public sidewalks and roads.

If you plan to buy a hoverboard, look for reputable, known sellers that give information about how they can be contacted if there is a problem. The hoverboard should be labeled with a certified national testing laboratory mark. The absence of a mark may mean safety is not a priority for that manufacturer.

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