



W.A.T.C.H.'S 2014 Summer Safety Report For Parents and Caregivers

POOL-RELATED INJURIES TOPS W.A.T.C.H.'S LIST OF 10 POTENTIAL SUMMER SAFETY CONCERNS

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(Boston, MA- June 9, 2015) World Against Toys Causing Harm, Inc. (W.A.T.C.H.) today revealed 10 top “Summer Safety Traps” as examples of some of the many different types of hazards parents and caregivers need to avoid to safeguard children this summer season.

Heading this year’s list is swimming pool-related warnings that could help prevent severe injuries, and even death, to young children. **These warnings focus on baby pools, child floating devices and swimming pool covers.**

At a press conference at Franciscan Hospital for Children in Boston, Consumer Advocates Joan E. Siff, President of W.A.T.C.H., and James A. Swartz, a nationally known trial attorney and Director of W.A.T.C.H., discussed their summer safety concerns, including some lesser-known warm weather safety traps and recreational products that parents need to avoid to help prevent tragic accidents this season.

Safety concerns highlighted in this year’s report also included **backyard trampolines, inflatable recreational products, non-motorized scooters, moveable soccer goal posts, bicycle helmet straps, realistic looking toy guns, and toys with small parts.**

Long-time consumer advocates, **Siff** and **Swartz** said the combination of warm weather and school vacation is an opportunity for children to enjoy the outdoors, but can also be a time for injuries. Summer months account for nearly half of all injury-related deaths to children. Hospital emergency departments will treat about 2.7 million children injured in accidents this summer.

Siff and Swartz noted that at least 174 children between the ages of 1 and 14 drowned in swimming pools or spas last summer. Citing last week’s tragic accident when a five-year-old girl drowned after falling through a possibly loose part of a pool cover, Siff cautions:

“When it comes to water safety, parents and caregivers have to be particularly vigilant-- drowning is often quick and silent. Review all safety measures taken to make sure there are multiple barriers of protection and that everything- gates, pool covers, alarms, to name a few- are working.”

Swartz took particular aim at toy guns: “Toys that look like real guns have no place in the hands of children--there have been tragic consequences when law enforcement officers mistake realistic looking toy guns for real weapons.” He noted that last year a 12-year-old in Cleveland, Ohio was fatally shot by an officer while playing with a fake pistol. In Boston, police seized 250 replica guns.


Siff advises parents to remember to regularly examine the toys in their child’s toy box. Recent recalls are a reminder that not all toys are safe. In a recent 12 month period alone, there were 17 toy recalls, representing over 4,800,000 units of dangerous toys available for sale in the US and Canada.




W. A. T. C. H.
 world against toys causing harm, inc.

“SUMMER SAFETY TRAPS”

(EXAMPLES OF SOME OF THE MANY HAZARDS TO WATCH OUT FOR AND WHAT TO DO TO SO CHILDREN CAN HAVE A SAFER SUMMER...)

TRAP:	BABY POOLS
	
HAZARD:	Potential for drowning!
W.A.T.C.H. OUT!	Baby pools are portable and convenient to assemble; yet the potential for serious injury is easily overlooked. Baby pools are often left filled with water with no barriers to prevent access. Water in backyard baby pools, as well as in other containers such as buckets and fountains, while inviting to children, can potentially and tragically lead to drowning.
FACTS:	Young children can drown in as little as 2 inches of water. The non-pool/ non-spa injury statistics, typically involving smaller bodies of water such as buckets and fountains, emphasize the seriousness of the risk that even shallow water poses to children: 434 children under 5 (2006-2010) died and 233 children under 5 (2006-2010) were injured from non-pool and non-spa related submersions. 92% of these injuries and deaths occurred at home.
TO DO:	<i>Never leave baby pools and other containers with water unattended in your backyard--empty after each use and turn upside down so they cannot collect rainwater!</i>

TRAP:	FLOTATION DEVICES: WATER WINGS, RAFTS
	
HAZARD:	Potential for Drowning!
W.A.T.C.H. OUT!	Flotation devices, such as water wings and inflatable rings, can provide a false sense of security that a child is safe in the water. Additionally, larger flotation devices, such as rafts, can block the view of a child in trouble.
FACTS:	Flotation devices are not safety devices and do not replace the need for adult supervision. Drowning is the leading cause of accidental death between 1 and 4 years.
TO DO:	<i>Diligent supervision is required around water whether or not a child is using inflatable pool toys!</i>

TRAP:	POOL COVERS
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HAZARD:	<i>Potential for serious injury or death!</i>
W.A.T.C.H. OUT!	Checking child safety measures used in homes and backyards is an important way to kick-off the summer. Diligently check home child safety measures already in place, including pool covers, alarms, automatic-locking gates, window guards and others to make sure they are secure. See what needs to be repaired and what other safety measures should be added. When it comes to water safety, multiple barriers of protection must be used to protect children.
FACTS:	Pool Covers: Gaps in pool covers as well as sagging pool covers that can collect water may put children at risk of drowning. Recently a five-year-old girl drowned after authorities determined she may have fallen through a loose part of the cover on a backyard pool that had not been used for several years. Pool and Spa Annual Statistics: The importance of multiple layers of effective barriers between children and pools is highlighted by the number of pool and spa-related submersion incidences: Each year, approximately 380 children under 15 years old drown in pools and spas and about 5,400 children under 15 years old are seen in emergency rooms for submersion related injuries
TO DO:	<i>Regularly check all safety measures used around the home and backyard to make sure they are secure and adequate!</i>


TRAP:	<u>BACKYARD TRAMPOLINES</u>
HAZARD:	<i>Potential for fractures, cervical spine injuries, and paralysis!</i>
W.A.T.C.H. OUT!	Although popular among children and adolescents, backyard trampolines have been associated with potentially catastrophic injuries. Netting, padding and adult supervision have not prevented the numerous injuries relating to trampoline use and may provide a false sense of security. Trampolines are not toys and should not be used at homes.
FACTS:	There were an estimated 104,691 trampoline-related injuries in 2014 and 22 trampoline-related deaths between 2000 and 2009. Most injuries from trampolines occur at private homes. The American Academy of Pediatrics has warned against the use of home trampolines due to the potential for permanent and devastating consequences.
TO DO:	<i>Do not use backyard trampolines!</i>

TRAP:	<u>INFLATABLE AMUSEMENTS (bounce houses and more)</u>
HAZARD:	<i>Potential for impact and other serious injuries!</i>
W.A.T.C.H. OUT!	Inflatable amusements have been associated with many injuries and deaths both in commercial and residential use. Colorful, inflatable bounce houses are frequent staples at backyard birthday parties during the summer months. However, the inherent potential danger of a “toy” that invites children to jump and bounce in close proximity to each other is not worth the risk. In addition, there have been numerous reports of these bounce houses falling over or being blown away.
FACTS:	Inflatable amusements for children, such as bounce houses, have led to injuries and deaths. From 2003 to 2013, inflatable amusements were responsible for approximately


	113,272 injuries —90% of these injuries involved moon bounces (aka bounce houses)— and 12 reported deaths.
TO DO:	<i>Avoid inflatable bounce houses!</i>


TRAP: #9	NON-MOTORIZED SCOOTERS
	
HAZARD:	<i>Potential for impact injuries, traumatic brain injuries, death!</i>
W.A.T.C.H. OUT!	Non-motorized scooters are responsible for the most toy-related injuries. As with other toys with wheels, never let children ride non-motorized scooters near traffic and always use appropriate safety gear, such as helmets and other protective padding.
FACTS:	An estimated 61,000 injuries associated with non-motorized scooters are treated in hospital emergency rooms each year (52,500 of these injuries are to children under 15 years old). In a recent three-year period, there were 5 reported deaths involving non-motorized scooters and motor vehicles.
TO DO:	<i>The number of injuries from non-motorized scooters may be a compelling reason to avoid these toys altogether. But if your child is allowed to use non-motorized scooters, never let them ride near traffic or without the proper safety gear!</i>

TRAP:	MOVEABLE SOCCER GOALS
	
HAZARD:	<i>Potential for fall and head injuries!</i>
W.A.T.C.H. OUT!	A soccer goal can mean hours of fun for children at the local park or a tragedy that could have been avoided. Large moveable soccer goals, which have not been properly anchored, have fallen on children and crushed them.
FACTS:	At least 35 cases of children dying from soccer goals falling over since 1979.
TO DO:	<i>Make sure that soccer goals are properly anchored when in use and stored when not in use. And DON'T let your children swing or climb on them!</i>

TRAP:	DRAWSTRINGS & BICYCLE HELMET STRAPS on playgrounds
	
HAZARD:	<i>Potential for Strangulation!</i>
W.A.T.C.H. OUT!	Drawstrings, typically on the neck or waist of children's clothing, can catch on slides and other playground equipment leading to death or near strangulation. Similarly, straps from bicycle helmets worn on playgrounds can get caught on equipment leading to entanglement and other serious consequences.
FACTS:	<u>Drawstrings:</u> There have been 26 reports (as of 2011 to the CPSC) of children who died when drawstrings from their clothing became entangled on playground slides, school bus doors, or other objects. <u>Helmets:</u> The CPSC has reported deaths when straps from children's helmets snag on playground equipment or other objects, such as trees, and lead to asphyxiation. <u>Playgrounds:</u> There were at least 40 deaths associated with playground equipment between 2001 and 2008; the average victim was 6 years olds. Out of the 27 fatalities that were from strangulation or asphyxiation, 20 deaths involved a second product such as a drawstring, leash or jump rope, 12 deaths were associated with slides, and 9 deaths

	were on swings. Recalls: Many children’s clothes with drawstrings have been recalled due to the risk of strangulation; however, clothes with similar hazards can still be found in stores. Last year a company paid \$600,000 in civil penalty for failing to report selling 2,100 children’s garments made with drawstrings.
TO DO:	<i>Remove drawstrings from children’s clothing! Remove bicycle helmets while on playground equipment!</i>

TRAP:	REALISTIC-LOOKING TOY GUNS
	
HAZARD:	<i>Realistic looking toy weaponry!</i>
W.A.T.C.H. OUT!	In today’s world, there is no excuse for outfitting children with realistic toy guns designed to produce dangerous and unnecessary thrills.
FACTS:	Existing regulations addressing the hazards associated with such “toys” are inadequate. Detailed replicas have resulted in a number of deaths through the years. Between 1997 and 2014 in New York alone, four people died using toy guns when law enforcement officers thought the toys were real. Last year a 12-year-old boy in Cleveland, Ohio was fatally shot when an officer mistook his replica pistol for a real weapon.
TO DO:	<i>Realistic toy weaponry should never be sold as toys!</i>

TRAP:	TOYS WITH SMALL PARTS
	
HAZARD:	<i>Potential for ingestion and choking injuries!</i>
W.A.T.C.H. OUT!	This summer, continue to watch out for toys that are choking hazards for young children. Although this hazard is a year-round concern, toys with small parts have earned a place as a summer safety trap due to the continuing volume of recalls and injuries to children from dangerous toys with small parts. Easily detachable small parts, long slender parts that could be mouthed, and soft materials that could occlude a child’s airway have no place in toy boxes.
FACTS:	15,100 units of the above-pictured “Police Press and Go” toy vehicle, was recalled in the U.S. and Canada due to a choking hazard presented when the hat detaches. Further evidence of the problem of small parts on children’s toys are the 8 recalls for choking and/or ingestion hazards in a recent twelve-month period.
TO DO:	<i>Be familiar with the types of choking and ingestion hazards associated with toy injuries and deaths in the past! Check toys for long slender parts, pieces that could easily break off, and soft materials that could be ingested and block a young child’s airway!</i>

Any reference to, or photographic representation of, specific products herein neither constitutes nor implies a recommendation or a criticism of such products, but rather is used only as a visual example of the types of potential hazards discussed.

SOURCES: CPSC, NATIONAL HELMET SAFETY INSTITUTE, NEISS, AND ACADEMIC PEDIATRIC JOURNAL

*FACTS: INJURIES AND DEATH STATISTICS IN THE U.S.A. UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED. INJURIES- REFER TO INJURIES TREATED IN U.S. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOMS

W.A.T.C.H., Inc. is a non-profit organization working to educate the public about child safety. W.A.T.C.H helps raise awareness about the dangers lurking in many toys, children’s products, and recreational activities. Noted trial attorneys, authors and consumer advocates, Edward Swartz (1934-2010), James Swartz, Joan Siff and W.A.T.C.H. have been responsible for the “10 WORST TOYS” nominees released for over 30 years as well as a **Summer Safety Report** addressing summer hazards for children. For more information on W.A.T.C.H. and the press conference, please visit www.toysafety.org.

James A. Swartz, Director of W.A.T.C.H., noted trial attorney, author and consumer advocate.

Joan E. Siff, President of W.A.T.C.H.

Franciscan Hospital for Children, located in the Brighton neighborhood of Boston, is the largest pediatric rehabilitation facility in New England. Programs and services offered address the medical, behavioral and educational needs of children. For more information on Franciscan Hospital for Children please visit www.franciscanhospital.org. Become a fan on Facebook at www.facebook.com/FranciscanHFC or follow Franciscan Hospital for Children on Twitter at www.twitter.com/FranciscanHFC