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W.A.T.C.H.'S 2016 Summer Safety Report For Parents and Caregivers

EYE INJURIES and BACKYARD DROWNINGS TOP W.A.T.C.H.'S LIST OF 10 POTENTIAL SUMMER SAFETY CONCERNS

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(Boston, MA- June 28, 2016) Noting that hospital emergency departments will treat about 2.7 million children injured in accidents this summer, World Against Toys Causing Harm, Inc. (W.A.T.C.H.) today stressed the urgency of raising awareness about children's products that can cause serious injury.

At a press conference at Franciscan Children's 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., showcased **10 top "Summer Safety Traps"** as examples of the many different types of hazards parents and caregivers need to avoid to safeguard children this fourth of July weekend and throughout the summer season. 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, they noted.

Topping this year's list are **toy guns and other air-born toys** popular for outdoor play in the warm weather that can lead to eye injuries and other serious injuries. Parents may be unaware that some toy guns can shoot the supplied "ammunition" with enough force to potentially cause eye injuries. Other projectiles and flying toys, such as toy darts and helicopters with rigid or sharp edges, can also cause face or eye injuries.

Swartz noted that eye injuries to children from nonpowder guns alone, such as airsoft and pellet guns, increased exponentially by more than 500% between 2010 and 2012.* He warns parents to "look out for toys that could cause significant eye injuries- an often overlooked hazard."

Water safety is another vitally important issue, particularly as the Fourth of July weekend approaches -- a time for celebration, but also a time when there is typically an increase in reported drownings. This year's Summer Safety Report emphasizes that reviewing water safety precautions can save lives and reduce the drowning hazards that may be in your or your neighbors' backyards, including: baby pools, inflatable pool toys, gardening buckets and swimming pool covers filled with water.

The facts tell the story:

* In the three-year period between 2010 and 2012, an average of 26 children drowned in pools and spas over 4th of July week.

* In 2013, 355 people drowned in pools and spas in the United States. About eighty-seven percent of fatal drownings to children under 5 years old occurred at someone's home.

* Just last week a thirteen-year-old boy tragically drowned at Walden Pond Reservoir. Siff cautions, “Drowning is often quick and silent – keep your guard up and review water safety precautions to help keep kids safe around water this summer.”

Other Safety concerns highlighted in this year’s report included **non-motorized scooters, bicycle helmet straps, and toys with small parts.**


The continuing issue of hoverboard fires and injuries reveals the urgent need for safer products, better pre-market testing, and a more responsible marketplace to help prevent injuries. “The significant hazards associated with hoverboards this year is a wakeup call that products should be tested before they reach consumers and not tested on consumers,” said Siff.


Siff noted: “In a 20- month period, there were 26 toy recalls, representing over 3,390,000 units of dangerous toys available for sale in the US and Canada. Many children’s toys and summer recreational products this year carry labeling which ignores or minimizes the risks to children, makes unsuitable recommendations regarding age, or impossible recommendations as to supervision.”


She advises parents to “remember to regularly examine the toys in their child’s toy box.” Recent toy recalls are a further “reminder that not all toys are safe and, particularly when children’s safety is at stake, we need to remain vigilant.”


“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: 1	TOY GUNS WITH PROJECTILE AMMUNITION
	
HAZARD:	Potential For Eye Injury!
W.A.T.C.H. OUT!	Replica guns, toy bow and arrows, and other toys that “take aim” can turn summer outdoor play into a serious matter when eyes are involved. Projectile ammunition can lead to serious eye injuries. These products are often sold with inadequate or no warnings and without protective eye gear.
FACTS:	This “Nerf Rival Precision Battling”, shown in the above photograph, is sold for “ages 14+” with 7 “high impact” rounds marketed to have a velocity of “100FPF/30MPS”. The box has no warnings and shows users wearing masks but no protective eye gear is included. The replica gun can shoot the supplied ammunition with enough force to potentially cause eye injuries. Eye injuries from toy guns are on the rise. Eye injuries to children from nonpowder guns alone, such as airsoft and pellet guns, increased exponentially by more than 500% between 2010 and 2012.*
TO DO:	Projectile-firing toys can cause serious eye injuries! Avoid toys that have enough force to injure an eye. In addition to toys that shoot “bullets,” watch out for foam dart guns and other projectile toys that could potentially lead to eye contusions and even blindness.

TRAP: 2	AIRBORNE TOYS (i.e. toy helicopters, boomerangs)
	
HAZARD:	Potential for laceration, impact and eye injuries!
W.A.T.C.H. OUT!	Children of all ages are attracted to flying toys, but may be unaware of their hidden dangers. When these toys come into contact with a child's head or face, serious injury can occur.
FACTS:	Sharp edges and rigid parts on airborne toys, such as toy helicopters and boomerangs have the potential to cause eye, blunt trauma and other injuries upon impact.
TO DO:	Avoid airborne toys that could lead to eye and other injuries!


TRAP: 3	HOVERBOARDS
	
HAZARD:	Potential for Impact and Burn Injuries!
W.A.T.C.H. OUT!	One of this year's most popular outdoor items, self-balancing scooters, better known as hoverboards, have made headlines for their tendency to spontaneously burst into flames. While some retailers, airlines and schools banned this product earlier in the year, hoverboards remain in the marketplace despite many warning signs. Hoverboards remain a serious safety concern. In addition to the risk of burns from fire, there are ride-related concerns associated with hoverboards that can lead to impact injuries. The recent history with hoverboards shows the importance of pre-market testing and better-designed products to prevent unnecessary injuries and deaths. Consumers should not be used as a testing ground for unsafe products.
FACTS:	In February, the CPSC declared hoverboards to be unsafe due to "an unreasonable risk of fire" and cautioned "consumers risk serious injury and death if their self-balancing scooters ignite and burn." In the short time period between December 1, 2015 to February 17, 2016, there were 52 reports of fires from hoverboards in 24 different states. The CPSC has urged manufacturers to comply with voluntary safety standards designed to prevent fires, but this does not mean all hoverboards are safe. Last month a hoverboard ignited causing a fire in an apartment in Boston's North End. Hoverboards that pose a risk of serious injury from fire may still be found in people's homes and for sale. Also, due to the risk of impact from using hoverboards, many people have been injured. Since August, there have been at least 7,200 reports of emergency room visits due to falls from hoverboards.
TO DO:	Avoid products with a history of safety concerns- including fire and impact injuries!


TRAP: 4	SHALLOW BACKYARD WATER: Baby Pools and Garden Buckets
	
HAZARD:	<i>Potential for drowning!</i>
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: 5	FLOTATION DEVICES: WATER WINGS, RAFTS
	
HAZARD:	<i>Potential for Drowning!</i>
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: 6	POOL COVERS: A Lesser Known Danger of Pools
	
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: In 2013, there a reported 355 children under 15 years old drowned in pools and spas. Between 2013 and 2015, about 5,600 children under 15 years old were 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: 7	<u>BOUNCE HOUSES and BACKYARD TRAMPOLINES</u>
	
HAZARD:	<i>Potential for impact and other serious injuries!</i>
W.A.T.C.H. OUT!	Backyard activities that are designed for children to jump and bounce can be an invitation for injury. Bounce Houses: 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. Recently a bounce house, rented for a child’s birthday party in New York, became airborne and crashed into nearby power lines. Backyard Trampolines: Although popular among children and adolescents, backyard trampolines have been associated with potentially catastrophic injuries including fractures, cervical spine injuries and paralysis. 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:	Bounce Houses: Bounce houses and other inflatable amusements for children 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. Backyard Trampolines: 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>Avoid bounce houses! Do not use backyard trampolines!</i>

TRAP: 8	<u>NON-MOTORIZED SCOOTERS</u>
	
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 56,000 injuries associated with non-motorized scooters were treated in hospital emergency rooms in 2014 (47,400 of these injuries are to children under 15 years old). In a recent three-year period, there were 7 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: 9	<u>DRAWSTRINGS & BICYCLE HELMET STRAPS on playgrounds</u>
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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:	<p>Drawstrings: 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.</p> <p>Helmets: Wearing bicycle helmets can save lives and reduce the risk of injury by at least 45%. But when not riding, children should remove their helmets. 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.</p> <p>Playgrounds: 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.</p> <p>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.</p>
TO DO:	<i>Remove drawstrings from children’s clothing! Remove bicycle helmets while on playground equipment!</i>

TRAP: 10	TOYS WITH SMALL PARTS
	
HAZARD:	<i>Potential for choking injuries!</i>
W.A.T.C.H. OUT!	Recently there have been numerous recalls addressing the issue of toys with parts that can detach posing a choking hazard to young children. These hidden hazards, difficult for parents to identify at the time of purchase, must be prevented with better design and premarket testing before they reach toy store shelves. Although a year-round concern, toys with small parts have earned a place as a summer safety trap due to the continuing volume of recalls from these types of dangerous toys. The above-pictured toys, the <i>Land of Nod Octo-Rattle</i> and the <i>Holly Lobby Infant Rattle</i> , are two examples of toys sold for young children recalled by the CPSC this year due to the risk of choking.
FACTS:	The estimated seventeen (17) recalls for choking hazards in the last twenty months is evidence of the continued problem of small parts on toys sold to young children. In addition to small parts, many other types of dangerous toys continue to be recalled, including toys that could burn, poison, and strangle children. In the last twenty (20) months, there have been at least twenty-seven (27) toy recalls representing over three million (3,300,000) units of toys with recognized safety defects in the United States

	and Canada proving the inadequacy of existing standards. According to the CPSC, in 2014, there were an estimated 251,800 toy-related injuries and 38 children under 15 years of age died in toy-related incidents between 2012 and 2014. Although even one injury to one child is too many, particularly when the injury is preventable, recent statistics emphasize that dangerous toys continue to pose a year-round threat.
TO DO:	<i>This summer, continue to watch out for toys that are choking hazards for young children! 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: *"Pediatric eye injuries due to nonpowder guns in the United States," by Rachel Lee, BS, and Douglas R. Fredrick, MD, DOI: The Journal of AAPOS, (April 2016). CPSC, NATIONAL HELMET SAFETY INSTITUTE. NEISS. 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.

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Franciscan Children's, 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 Children's please visit www.franciscanhospital.org. Become a fan on Facebook at www.facebook.com/FranciscanHFC or follow Franciscan Children's on Twitter at www.twitter.com/FranciscanHFC