

W.A.T.C.H.'s Annual 2024 Summer Safety Report

**W.A.T.C.H. ANNOUNCES ITS
"10 SUMMER SAFETY TRAPS FOR 2024"**

**UNDER-RECOGNIZED and HIDDEN HAZARDS
KIDS COULD ENCOUNTER THIS SUMMER**

**WHAT PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS NEED TO KNOW TO HELP KEEP KIDS SAFE
WARM WEATHER HAZARDS ASSOCIATED WITH OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL PRODUCTS**

ON W.A.T.C.H.'S LIST OF 10 POTENTIAL SUMMER SAFETY CONCERNS FOR KIDS:
SAND-HOLES THAT CAN COLLAPSE ON CHILDREN,
GEL BEADS AS "AMMUNITION", TIK TOK TRENDS AND TOY GUNS,
POOL DRAIN SUCTION HAZARDS, E- SCOOTER RISKS TO KIDS,
BACKYARD KIDDIE POOLS WITH RAINWATER

Boston, MA (MAY 22, 2024): As Memorial Day weekend ushers in the summer season, **World Against Toys Causing Harm, Inc. (W.A.T.C.H.)** releases its **critical 2024 Summer Safety Report**. The report, vital for every family planning to enjoy the warm weather, features **W.A.T.C.H.'s 2024 "10 Summer Safety Traps."** **Consumer Advocates Joan E. Siff, President of W.A.T.C.H., and James A. Swartz, Director of W.A.T.C.H.,** showcase these "10 Summer Safety Traps" as representative of some of the many different types of hazards families can avoid to safeguard children during the summer when kids will be spending more hours swimming, riding, climbing, and playing backyard games. **The report spotlights safety traps that are often overlooked, underrecognized, or hidden.** The traps outlined have recently been linked to child injuries and fatalities, or historically have been known to pose risks to children.

During the summer months, when outdoor activities increase, injuries among children typically double.ⁱ W.A.T.C.H.'s timely release highlights not only general seasonal risks but also underscores recent specific incidents that have heightened concerns for child safety. Highlighted in the report are various hazards associated with activities that children could encounter this summer. These activities, while popular among families, may carry risks that are not widely recognized. For example, **the serious hazards associated with inflatable bounce houses were spotlighted after a devastating incident in Arizona, April 2024, where a gust of wind tragically claimed the life of a young child.**ⁱⁱ Similarly, this report includes a critical review of **e-bikes and e-scooters**. Despite their growing popularity for recreation and transportation, these vehicles have been linked to numerous accidents, emphasizing the importance of age-appropriate use.

Listed below are some more recent and alarming tragedies relating to the topics covered in W.A.T.C.H.'s "10 Summer Safety Traps" that serve as a critical reminder of the ongoing risks and the importance of safety in recreational activities:

- **Gel Beads & Toy Gun "Ammunition":** Sometimes known hazards can turn up in unexpected places, especially when there are children of different ages in the same household. As temperatures rise, more kids will be enjoying outdoor play, some will be wielding projectile toys like gel blaster toy guns, which shoot water beads as ammunition. This may lead to an uptick in water bead presence around homes this summer putting young children at risk when "ammunition" is left behind in the yard. **Last summer, a 10-month-old baby tragically died after ingesting a water bead from a child's activity set that was later recalled.**ⁱⁱⁱ
- **Sand Holes:** Sand holes, seemingly harmless, can quickly turn into deadly traps if they collapse on top of children playing on beaches. **In Florida, February 2024, a 7-year-old girl tragically suffocated after a sand hole she was digging collapsed on her.**^{iv}
- **Baby Pools and Shallow Water:** Portable baby pools are a convenient and fun way to entertain young children on a hot summer day. However, baby pools that are not emptied after use or that collect rainwater can be a drowning hazard for

young children who can drown in as little as 1 to 2 inches of water. **In Louisiana, July 2023, a 1-year-old girl drowned in a backyard baby pool after her dog accidentally knocked her into it.**^v

- **Drain Suction:** Children having fun on a scorching summer afternoon, whether they're splashing in the local pool or attending a friend's pool gathering, might unknowingly face a grave danger lurking beneath the water's surface. **Faulty, outdated, or damaged drains and outlet covers in pools and spas** can present a significant risk of entrapment or drowning, especially for young ones. **In Houston, March 2024, an 8-year-old girl was tragically found dead in a pool's narrow pipe, part of the hotel's pool system, underscoring the dangers of faulty pool drainage systems.**^{vi}

The recent deaths and injuries to children listed above and detailed in W.A.T.C.H.'s "10 Summer Safety Traps" underline the necessity for increased awareness and improved product safety measures to help prevent such tragedies. **Remaining vigilant this summer and not overlooking safety traps that are hiding in plain site is essential.**

Joan E. Siff, President of W.A.T.C.H., states, "Don't be lulled into a false sense of security by the popularity of a toy or activity. Just because something is widely used does not guarantee it is safe for every child." Siff adds, "The hidden dangers of common summer activities can lead to severe outcomes, particularly for young children who are most vulnerable. It's essential to understand these risks as families head into the summer."

Most preventable injuries take place near home, including an estimated 56.7% (128,800) of injury-related deaths in 2022. James A. Swartz, Director of W.A.T.C.H., cautions, "Each year, we find that accidents often occur in familiar settings, turning what should be a joyful time into a tragedy." Swartz continued, "Many of these incidents could be avoided with appropriate knowledge, precautions, and better-designed recreational products. Our goal is not only to inform but also to instigate change in manufacturing and marketing practices to make children's play safer."

Additionally, the risks extend beyond the playground and backyard, encompassing hazards like carbon monoxide poisoning from boat engines and the perilous consequences of social media trends like the 'Senior Assassin' game. **Carbon monoxide poisoning from boat engines represents a significant hazard**, particularly during summer when families spend more time on the water. **This silent killer is especially dangerous for children**, due to their increased metabolic demand, **and its symptoms can often be mistakenly attributed to seasickness.** The rise of social media can lead to risky behaviors, particularly visible during school breaks. **One notable example is the "Senior Assassin" game, popularized on platforms like TikTok**, where participants, often teenagers, use water guns that resemble real firearms in public settings. This can dangerously blur the lines between play and potential real-world threats, as demonstrated by an incident where a concealed carry holder mistook the game for a genuine threat.^{vii} **The combination of toy guns and social media challenges can pose a serious risk to children's safety, including confusion with real firearms, possible encounters with law enforcement, and tragically the potential for injuries or fatalities.**

W.A.T.C.H. emphasizes that many of these injuries are preventable. This urgent and timely message underscores the importance of staying informed, checking for product recalls, and understanding the potentially fatal consequences when raising awareness about under-recognized and hidden hazards. Additionally, being aware of past injuries and deaths associated with summer activities and recreational products is crucial for preventing similar incidents in the future. **W.A.T.C.H. emphasizes the importance of sharing information and proactively spreading the word about safety so that avoiding potential hazards is top of mind for families and caregivers as children enjoy the summer.**

The full list of the "10 Summer Safety Traps" are available in the attached report, which W.A.T.C.H. hopes will serve as a resource to ensure a safer summer for all children:

About W.A.T.C.H.

World Against Toys Causing Harm, Inc. (W.A.T.C.H.) is a non-profit organization dedicated to educating the public about dangerous children's products and advocating for child safety. W.A.T.C.H. works year-round to promote safer manufacturing and marketing of toys, aiming to prevent injuries and save lives through greater awareness and more stringent safety standards.

i <https://toyfacts.nsc.org/all-injuries-overview/>

ii <https://www.khcnbc.com/news/local/news/2-year-old-arizona-boy-dies-bounce-house-goes-airborne-during-guest-wth-rms150058>

iii <https://www.habitat.org/news/press-releases/habitat-cary-collins-introduces-law-to-ban-obscure-water-toys-and-protect-kids>

iv <https://www.fox31.com/story/news/2024/03/22/1233085129/girl-dies-sand-hole-florida-collapse>

v <https://www.startribune.com/news/nation-wed/616416101/article/677644158.html>

vi <https://www.statemsn.com/story/news/local/2024/03/26/9-year-old-girl-dies-piscina-dead-houston-doubletree-hotel-pool-pipe-lazy-river-lawsuit/73104828007/>

vii https://www.facebook.com/guneeppjyats/823257013167986?fb_embed_post