

W.A.T.C.H.'s Annual 2026 Summer Safety Report

**W.A.T.C.H. ANNOUNCES ITS
"10 SUMMER SAFETY TRAPS FOR 2026"**

**UNDERRECOGNIZED 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:
REUSABLE MAGNETIC WATER BALLOONS, GEL BLASTER AMMUNITION, ABOVE-GROUND POOLS WITH
HIDDEN ACCESS RISKS, AND OVERHEATED PLAYGROUNDS

Boston, Mass. (May 19, 2026): As summer quickly approaches and families begin flocking to backyards, beaches, and playgrounds, **World Against Toys Causing Harm, Inc. (W.A.T.C.H.)** releases its critical **2026 Summer Safety Report**. The report, vital for every family planning to enjoy the warm weather, **features W.A.T.C.H.'s 2026 "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 have recently been linked to child injuries and fatalities or historically have been known to pose risks to children, and are often overlooked, underrecognized, or hidden.

This year's "10 Summer Safety Traps" include:

1. Hidden Pull: Reusable Magnetic Water Balloons
2. No Ladder Needed: Hidden Access Risks in Above-Ground Pools
3. Too Hot to Handle: Overheated Slides & Playground Surfaces
4. Small Beads, Big Risks: Gel Blasters & Water Bead Ammo
5. Inflated Confidence: Swim Rings & Other Inflatable Pool Toys
6. Bouncing Backfires: Backyard Trampolines and Inflatable Bounce Houses
7. No Deep End Required: Hidden Backyard Shallow Water Traps (Kiddie Pools, Pool Covers)
8. Charging into Danger: E-Bikes & E-Scooters
9. Towed Into Trouble: Tubes, Towables & Boat Propeller Risks
10. Kid-Sized Riders, Adult-Sized Risks: ATVs

Joan E. Siff and James A. Swartz are urging families to stay alert and informed this summer, as many of this year's safety traps are hiding in plain sight. Joan E. Siff, President of W.A.T.C.H., states, **"Just because a product is popular or widely used does not automatically make it safe."** Siff adds, "Many everyday summer activities can carry serious risks, especially for children. From reusable magnetic water balloons and inflatable pool toys to trampolines, e-bikes, and ATVs, parents may not always recognize the potential hidden dangers these products can present. As families head into the summer season, staying informed and understanding these risks can play a critical role in helping prevent avoidable injuries and tragedies."

While agencies like the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) continue to play an important role in consumer safety, they are often limited by staffing, funding, and the ability to act quickly. “Safety oversight and recall processes are important, but they don’t always move fast enough to keep pace with today’s marketplace,” said James A. Swartz. “In many cases, dangerous products remain in homes and stores long before meaningful action is taken. **Families should remember that recalls and safety warnings are only one part of the equation, and not every hazardous product is ultimately recalled or widely recognized as unsafe.**”

Although many preventable injuries happen close to home, the risks associated with summer activities extend well beyond traditional backyard play. This year’s list highlights hazards ranging from inflatable bounce houses and towable water tubes to e-scooters, ATVs, and other high-powered recreational products that may be used by younger children and teens. Other products on this year’s list—including water bead ammunition, overheated playground equipment, and magnetic toys—reinforce W.A.T.C.H.’s message that awareness, safer product design, and proactive safety measures remain essential.

Several of this year’s traps involve water-related hazards, reflecting a concern that remains especially urgent during the summer months. From inflatable swim toys that can create a false sense of security, to shallow backyard water traps like kiddie pools left filled with rainwater, to above-ground pools with hidden access points, the dangers are often easy to overlook. As children spend more time around pools, beaches, splash pads, and backyard water play, drowning remains the leading cause of death from unintentional injury for children ages 1 to 4.

W.A.T.C.H. notes that awareness often comes before action. **Last summer, W.A.T.C.H. highlighted the dangers of inflatable swim rings and similar flotation products that can create a false sense of security around water.** This year, that concern remains on W.A.T.C.H.’s list, underscored by a **2026 CPSC warning after a 2-year-old child died while using a swim float that the agency says can flip over and/or submerge the occupant underwater.** That tragedy is a sobering reminder of why awareness matters—and why prevention efforts must continue. In 2025, CPSC approved a new federal safety standard aimed at reducing infant deaths and serious injuries associated with neck floats. This progress shows that awareness can drive meaningful change—but **safety standards and regulations should be viewed as floors, not ceilings, when it comes to protecting children.** The work is not done while hazardous products continue to put children at risk.

W.A.T.C.H. stresses that many of these injuries are preventable and that raising awareness is key. By sharing information and keeping safety top of mind, families and caregivers can help children enjoy a safer summer. **Full details on the “10 Summer Safety Traps” are available in the attached report, which W.A.T.C.H. hopes will serve as a practical resource for families. These are by no means the only summer hazards children may face, but they highlight several recurring and underrecognized risks where awareness can help prevent injuries and help families enjoy a safer summer.**

About W.A.T.C.H.

World Against Toys Causing Harm, Inc. (W.A.T.C.H.) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to educating the public about dangerous toys and other children’s products, hidden hazards, and recreational risks that can lead to preventable injuries and deaths. W.A.T.C.H. works year-round to promote child safety through greater awareness, safer product design, stronger safety standards, and more responsible manufacturing and marketing practices.

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