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Consumer Alert: CPSC Warns of Deadly Danger with Water Walking Balls

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March 31, 2011 WASHINGTON, D.C. - The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is urging *Release Number: 11-185* consumers to stop participating in a new type of water-related recreational activity, due to the potential risks of suffocation and drowning. The activity is called water walking and the water walking ball has numerous brand or ride names.

The fact that the product has no emergency exit and can be opened only by a person outside of the ball significantly heightens the risk of injury or death when a person inside the ball experiences distress. Pre-existing medical conditions, such as heart, lung, or breathing issues, can be made worse by use of this product.

An individual climbs into the large, see-through plastic ball; it is inflated with a blower through the zipper opening; and the zipper is closed, making the ball air-tight. The ball, with the person locked inside, then rolls around on a number of surfaces, including water, ice, or grass. The product is most commonly used by children and is used mainly as a ride in amusement parks, carnivals, malls, sporting events and other high-traffic areas. The product is also sold directly to the public for personal use.

Several states have banned or refused to provide permits for rides that use this product. CPSC is aware of two incidents involving this product. In one incident, a child was found unresponsive after being inside the ball for a very brief period of time, and emergency medical treatment was sought. In the second incident, a person inside of a ball suffered a fracture when the ball fell out of the shallow, above-ground pool onto the hard ground.

CPSC is warning consumers that there is a combination of risks associated with this product, including the potential for suffocation, as well as the potential for drowning and impact injuries. Because the ball is airtight, an inadequate air supply can result when oxygen is depleted and carbon dioxide accumulates inside the ball. Such a dangerous scenario can occur in as little as a few minutes. Because the water walking balls have no padding, impact injuries can occur if the balls collide with each other, or fall out of the pool onto concrete or other hard surfaces, such as ice or tile. These water walking balls are also being used on open water, creating the potential for injuries if the ball is struck by a boat or strikes a solid object, such as a buoy or pier. Additionally, the balls present a high risk of drowning if there is a leak or a puncture.

CPSC has informed state amusement ride officials of the risks associated with this product and encourages state officials not to permit this ride in their state. CPSC does not know of any safe way to use this product.



Risks associated with the use of water walking balls, a new type of water-related recreational activity, include the potential for suffocation, drowning, and impact injuries.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission is charged with protecting the public from unreasonable risks of injury or death associated with the use of thousands of types of consumer products under the agency's jurisdiction. Deaths, injuries, and property damage from consumer product incidents cost the nation more than \$1 trillion annually. CPSC is committed to protecting consumers and families from products that pose a fire, electrical, chemical or mechanical hazard. CPSC's work to help ensure the safety of consumer products - such as toys, cribs, power tools, cigarette lighters and household chemicals -- contributed to a decline in the rate of deaths and injuries associated with consumer products over the past 40 years.

Federal law bars any person from selling products subject to a publicly-announced voluntary recall by a manufacturer or a mandatory recall ordered by the Commission.

To report a dangerous product or a product-related injury go online to www.SaferProducts.gov or call CPSC's Hotline at 800-638-2772 or teletypewriter at 301-595-7054 for the hearing impaired. Consumers can obtain news release and recall information at www.cpsc.gov, on Twitter @[USCPSC](https://twitter.com/USCPSC) or by subscribing to CPSC's [free e-mail newsletters](#).