



News Release

OFFICE OF LOUISIANA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

Department of Public Safety & Corrections
Public Safety Services

8181 Independence Blvd.
Baton Rouge, LA 70806

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.lasfm.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Deputy Chief Brant Thompson

Release#:

Office: 225-925-3661

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Cell: 225-247-6251

Hoverboard Fires Causing Concern Nationally

National Association of State Fire Marshals Issues Warning

Baton Rouge, LA – One of the most sought-after gifts this holiday season is experiencing an increase in scrutiny due to incidents where the items, self-balancing, motorized scooters, commonly referred to as “hoverboards,” have burst into flames.

While the fires have occurred in a number of other countries, in November a Lafitte, Louisiana residence was badly damaged by a fire believed to have started when the scooter ignited while being recharged.

Likewise, last Friday, an Alabama man’s scooter quickly erupted into flames as he rode on a sidewalk. Video footage of the incident clearly shows projectiles blasting from the scooter as it burned profusely. The projectiles appeared to be components of the device’s battery pack.

In response to growing reports concerning the fires, the National Association of State Fire Marshals (NASFM) has issued an advisory to encourage consumers to research whether the scooters are in compliance with applicable and accepted inspection standards before making a purchase.

“Unfortunately, the fire that occurred in Lafitte involving a hoverboard is not a unique occurrence,” said State Fire Marshal H. “Butch” Browning, Jr., who serves as president of the NASFM Board of Directors. “The sheer number of incidents occurring around the country, and abroad, is what prompted our organization to address this serious issue on a national level,” added Browning.

When determining whether a scooter meets safety standards, buyers should look for indications of acceptance by recognized testing organizations, the information of which may appear on the item’s

packaging. Consumers should also consider purchasing the items from reputable online and local stores that offer warranties.

Among other safety measures to consider, owners should also take care when charging the scooters, ensuring that they are not overcharged or left unattended while charging. Precautions, such as following the manufacturer's instructions when charging, and avoiding the use of improper or imitation chargers, should also be a priority.

For more information on NASFM, visit the organization's website at www.firemarshals.org.

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE FIRE MARSHALS

PRESS RELEASE: HOVERBOARD SAFETY

December 3, 2015

The National Association of State Fire Marshals (NASFM) wishes you a happy and safe holiday season. This year, self-balancing scooters, more popularly known as hoverboards, are undoubtedly the hot ticket item on many wish lists. NASFM has received reports of injuries and fires involved with these devices, and we would like to take this opportunity to provide you with some safety tips for their use, care, and maintenance to ensure a merry holiday.

When shopping for a self-balancing scooter or hoverboard:

- 1) Please take the time to look at and research the product you buy. If it is compliant with federal standards, inspections, and certifications, it will have a mark on it or indicate such on its packaging, on the device itself, or on its charging equipment. Devices not bearing a mark indicating compliance likely have not been tested to meet minimum safety standards.
- 2) When buying online, take the time to verify that the device meets applicable standards. There are many of these products on the market, and many may not meet this country's inspection and safety requirements. Those that do will indicate such on the packaging, and on the device or its charging equipment.
- 3) Buy a device with a warranty, or buy it in person at a brick and mortar store. If you are buying online, buy from a reputable source. Also, check with your retailer regarding the safety of the device you are purchasing.

When charging your self-balancing scooter or hoverboard:

- 1) After it has been used, give the device time to cool off prior to charging.
- 2) Do not leave the device unattended while it is charging. Someone should be able to observe the device during its recharging time.
- 3) Do not overcharge the device; follow manufacturer's recommended charging times and do not leave device plugged into an outlet overnight.
- 4) Do not use imitation electrical chargers as they may be unsafe.
- 5) Keep to one plug per socket.

When operating your self-balancing scooter or hoverboard:

- 1) Wear appropriate safety equipment; similar to when riding a bicycle.
- 2) Do not text or operate a cell phone while using a self-balancing scooter or hoverboard.
- 3) Operate the device in accordance with its intended use.
- 4) Overheating – if you notice the device is very hot, stop using it and check with your manufacturer or retailer. This could suggest a faulty battery that needs replacing.

As more details become available and research is conducted into these incidents, NASFM will work to help keep you informed. If you should have any fire-related incidents regarding these devices, please contact your State Fire Marshal's Office. Have a safe holiday season.