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STEPHEN D. COAN
STATE FIRE MARSHAL

MEMORANDUM

To: Heads of Fire Departments

**From: Stephen D. Coan
State Fire Marshal**

Date: December 11, 2015

RE: Hoverboard Safety

By now, most of you have heard of recent fire incidents involving hoverboards (motorized skateboards) powered by lithium-ion battery packs. Attached is a guidance document from the National Association of State Fire Marshals (NASFM). Little is known definitively about the causes of these fires. The Department of Fire Services is aware of only one incident in Massachusetts, which was investigated by the local fire department, who in turn reported it to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (www.CPSC.gov).

These hoverboards are expected to be a popular holiday gift item. Please feel free to share this information with school and college administrators as they can expect a large number of these hoverboards on campus when their students return after the first of the year. Also of note is that some airlines have begun to ban hoverboards on their airplanes, over and above the regulations that the Federal Aviation Administration already has on transporting batteries.



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.