

INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: CITY MANAGER

DATE: 2016 May 10

FROM: JOE ROBERTSON

SUBJECT: HOVER BOARD FIRE DANGER

At the Public Safety Committee meeting on May 4, 2016 an enquiry was made regarding the fire danger posed by hover boards, which are also known as self-balancing scooters. Fire Department staff have since contacted the BC Office of the Fire Commissioner, checked the Public Safety Canada and the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission websites and searched other sources such as Consumer Reports and C-Net for information relating to these products.

Although Public Safety Canada warns of the fire risk related to hover boards, it does not have any Canadian statistics available. From December 1, 2015 to February 17, 2016 the US Consumer Product Safety Commission had received 52 reports of hover board fires resulting in over \$2,000,000 in property damage.

The fire risk associated with these products is from the ignition or explosion of the lithium ion battery and has occurred when the board is being charged, while being ridden or even when not in use. The underlying cause appears to be a failure of the wall separating the positive and negative liquid sides of the battery. Due to this inherent risk, the transportation of lithium ion batteries on passenger flights is prohibited by the International Civil Aviation Organization and Transport Canada, and is banned in the United States through the Code of Federal Regulations. Some commercial shippers such as the US Postal Service will not transport hover boards and several large on-line retailers no longer carry these products.

On February 2, 2016 the Underwriters Laboratories issued UL2272 – Outline of Investigation for Electrical Systems for Self-balancing scooters which will allow manufacturers to certify their products. Since then, on February 18, 2016 the US Consumer Product Safety Commission issued a letter (attached) urging manufacturers of self-balancing scooters to comply with United Nations and US Department of Transport regulations and the UL standard.

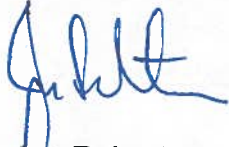
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The Burnaby Fire Department has not responded to any incidents involving fires caused by hover boards, and we are unaware of any incidents reported by other Lower Mainland fire departments.

The importation and safety of these devices is subject to oversight of federal regulatory agencies and is outside the purview of the Fire Department, but we will remain vigilant for and report fire events involving hover boards to Public Safety Canada, the provincial Office of the Fire Commissioner and the Fire Chiefs Association of BC.



Joe Robertson
Fire Chief

JR/sc



U. S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION
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February 18, 2016

Manufacturers, Importers, and Retailers of Self-Balancing Scooters

Dear Sir or Madam:

The U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is an independent federal regulatory agency responsible for protecting consumers from unreasonable risks of injury and death from consumer products. Our authority is set forth in the Consumer Product Safety Act (CPSA), 15 U.S.C. §§ 2051 – 2089.

I am writing this letter to urge you to make certain that self-balancing scooters that you import, manufacture, distribute, or sell in the United States comply with currently applicable voluntary safety standards, including all referenced standards and requirements contained in UL 2272 – *Outline of Investigation for Electrical Systems for Self-balancing Scooters*. The UL standard can be purchased from Underwriters Laboratories Inc. (<http://www.comm-2000.com/>). Additionally, all lithium ion battery products must comply with test requirements under UN/DOT 38.3 *Transport of Dangerous Goods for Lithium Metal and Lithium Ion Batteries*.

Self-balancing scooters that do not meet these voluntary safety standards pose an unreasonable risk of fire to consumers. Consumers risk serious injury or death if their self-balancing scooters ignite and burn. From December 1, 2015, through February 17, 2016, CPSC received reports, from consumers in 24 states, of 52 self-balancing scooter fires resulting in over \$2 million in property damage, including the destruction of two homes and an automobile. We believe that many of the reported incidents, and the related unreasonable risk of injuries and deaths associated with fires in these products, would be prevented if all such products were manufactured in compliance with the referenced voluntary safety standards.

The CPSC Office of Compliance and Field Operations staff considers self-balancing scooters that do not meet the safety standards referenced above to be defective, and that they may present a substantial product hazard under Section 15(a) of the CPSA, 15 U.S.C. § 2064(a) or could be determined to be an imminent hazard under Section 12 of the CPSA, 15 U.S.C. § 2061. Should the staff encounter such products at import, we may seek detention and/or seizure. In addition, if we encounter such products domestically, we may seek a recall of these products.

In view of the foregoing, I urge you to review your product line and ensure that all self-balancing scooters that you manufacture, import, distribute, or sell in the United States are in compliance with the above referenced voluntary safety standards. The CPSC staff will follow-up as appropriate in the future to ensure that the firms are meeting their obligations in this area.

Section 15(b) of the CPSA, 15 U.S.C. § 2064(b), requires every manufacturer (importer), distributor, and retailer of consumer products to report immediately to the Commission when it obtains information that reasonably supports the conclusion that a product distributed in commerce contains a defect that could create a substantial product hazard or that the product creates an unreasonable risk of serious injury or death. The statute also provides for imposition of civil and criminal penalties for failing to report the required information.

If you have any questions or we can be of any assistance, you may contact Scott Simmons, Director-Defect Investigations Division, at 301-504-7574 or SSimmons@cpsc.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. J. Howell". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.

Robert J. Howell