

Oh What Fun It Is To Ride . . . A Hoverboard? This Year's Must-Have Holiday Gift Poses Potential Litigation Risks for Manufacturers

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In 1989, the *Back to the Future* franchise made several fanciful predictions about 2015. One prediction may now be coming true: hoverboards have hit the streets — sort of. The currently-available hoverboards, as opposed to the Hollywood fantasy ones, are more properly described as hands-free, self-balancing scooters. Fueled by viral videos and celebrity social media posts, these battery-powered scooters are quickly becoming the must-have gift of the holiday season.

As the popularity of these hoverboards increases, however, so too does the potential for claims against manufacturers and sellers. Over the last three months, the Consumer Product Safety Commission (“CPSC”) has [reportedly](#) learned about nearly 20 separate injuries from hoverboard-related accidents, ranging from sprains and contusions to broken bones and at least one head injury.

While the CPSC has not taken any formal action in response to any of these injury reports, that could change based on recent news reports. **In the past two weeks, there have been two separate reports of hoverboards spontaneously igniting and causing a fire.** This type of potential hazard could capture the attention of consumers, manufacturers, and regulators alike.

In Louisiana, a family [reportedly](#) has sued a hoverboard manufacturer claiming that the hoverboard burst into flames while charging, destroying their home. In Alabama, a man recently posted a [video](#) showing his hoverboard engulfed in flames after it allegedly caught fire while in use. Although the CPSC has said that it has not yet received any reports of injuries due to hoverboard fires, it has [reportedly](#) announced that it is investigating the product line based on these fire-related complaints.

Despite these reports, the market for hoverboards shows no signs of slowing, particularly as children make their wish lists for the holiday season. As manufacturers, distributors, and sellers rise to meet that growing demand, they also should plan to meet the accompanying regulatory and litigation risks that follow.

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