

Consumer Product Safety Alert

FROM THE U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20207

Scooter Sales Skyrocket, Injuries Soar CPSC Recommends Riders Wear Safety Gear

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) reports that emergency room-treated injuries related to popular lightweight scooters have increased sixteen-fold from May to September 2000. CPSC data show that there were more than 8,000 scooter-related injuries treated in hospital emergency rooms in September alone. There have been 40,500 emergency room-treated injuries reported for 2000, and 5 deaths have occurred so far in 2000-2001. About 85 percent of the injuries are to children under 15 years of age.

CPSC recommends that riders, especially children, wear proper safety gear including a helmet and knee and elbow pads to help prevent injuries. CPSC estimates that more than 60 percent of injuries could be prevented or reduced in severity if protective gear had been worn.

The scooters, which first went on the market in the United States last year, are new versions of the foot-propelled scooters first popular in the 1950s. They are made of lightweight metal such as aluminum and have small low-friction wheels similar to those on in-line skates. They usually cost between \$50 and \$120 and typically weigh less than 10 pounds. They can be folded for easy portability.

Most injuries resulted when riders fell from the scooter. Fractures and dislocations accounted for about one-quarter of the injuries. Most of the fractures and dislocations were to arms and hands.

The best investment against injury is protective gear which can cost less than \$30.

CPSC recommends the following safety guidelines:

- Wear a helmet that meets CPSC's bike helmet standard, along with knee and elbow pads.
- Make sure both handle bars and the steering column are securely locked in place before riding.

- Routinely check all nuts and bolts to be sure they are secure.
- Ride the scooters on smooth, paved surfaces without any motor vehicle traffic. Avoid streets, or surfaces with water, sand, gravel or dirt.
- Do not ride the scooter at night.

