

Safety Advisory, but no Recall, for Water Ball Yo-Yo

September 25, 2003

by Stephanie Zimmermann - **Chicago Sun-Times**

The federal government issued a parental advisory Wednesday for yo-yo water balls but stopped short of a recall.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission said there is a "low but potential risk of strangulation" because the toy -- a liquid-filled ball on a stretchy cord -- can wrap around a child's head when swung like a lasso. The agency advised parents to supervise their children, cut the cord off the toy or throw the toy away.

The commission has received 186 reports of incidents in which children have wrapped the toy's cord around their neck. Though there were no lasting injuries, seven cases reported broken blood vessels affecting eyes, eyelids, cheeks, neck, scalp or the area behind the ears.

At least three retail chains -- Toys R Us, Walgreens and Saks -- have stopped selling the toys.

"It seems to me that, when you've got 186 reports of incidents, it would move the commission to do more than just notify people," said **Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.)**.

Nancy Cowles, executive director of Chicago-based advocacy group Kids in Danger, said she considers 186 complaints to be a lot "considering what it takes for a parent to call in the first place."

By the Consumer Product Safety Commission's estimate, 11 million to 15 million water yo-yo water balls have been sold in the United States.

Schakowsky, the ranking Democrat on the House Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade and Consumer Protection, plans to keep pushing for a ban on the toys.

Lisa Lipin of Skokie, whose 5-year-old son, Andrew, was nearly strangled by a yo-yo water ball in July, said she is going to petition the safety commission to reconsider. Lipin also is planning to push for a ban in Illinois.

"I'm not stopping, I can tell you that," she said.