

NEWS from CPSC

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

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CPSC Warns Of Hot Tub Temperatures

WASHINGTON, D.C. (December 31, 1979) -- Safety officials frequently warn the public about the dangers of drinking and driving. Now the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission is cautioning that drinking and hot tubing do not mix well either.

According to CPSC staffers, the use of hot tubs at water temperatures above the normal body temperatures can cause drowsiness which may lead to unconsciousness and subsequently result in drowning.

The risk of drowning is significantly heightened if individuals consume alcoholic beverages while, or prior to, soaking in hot water, CPSC staff warns. The Commission has been informed of 10 deaths recorded so far in 1979, three of which involved alcohol-related drowning in hot tubs heated to approximately 110 degrees Fahrenheit.

Even if no alcohol is consumed, extremely hot water during hot tub use can threaten life, CPSC reports. Soaking in a hot tub with water heated to 106 degrees Fahrenheit, for example, can raise human body temperature to the point of heat stroke (or impairment of the body's ability to regulate its internal temperature). **These conditions can be fatal even to fully healthy adults.**

Hot tub sales in the U.S. have increased about 125 percent in the past two years, from approximately 40,000 tubs sold in 1977 to approximately 90,000 sold this year. Based on industry projections, CPSC estimates that sales could climb as high as 135,000 tubs next year, a 50 per cent increase over 1979 sales.

As hot tubs have gained in popularity throughout the nation, so have concerns at CPSC that consumers learn how to use these products safely. Accordingly, CPSC staff strongly urges consumers to observe the following safety rules for hot tub use.

Safety Rules For Hot Tubs

1. Hot tub water temperatures should never exceed 104 degrees Fahrenheit. A temperature of 100 degrees is considered safe for a healthy adult. Special caution is suggested for young children.

2.

Excessive drinking during hot tub use can cause drowsiness which could lead to unconsciousness and subsequently result in drowning.

3.

Pregnant women beware! Soaking in water above 102 degrees Fahrenheit can cause fetal damage during the first three months of pregnancy (resulting in the birth of a brain damaged or deformed child). Pregnant women should stick to the 100-degree maximum rule.

4.

Before entering the hot tub, users should check the water temperature with an accurate thermometer; hot tub thermostats may err in regulating water temperatures by as much as four degrees.

5.

Persons with medical history of heart disease, circulatory problems, diabetes or blood pressure problems should obtain their physician's advice before using hot tubs.

6.

Persons taking medications which induce drowsiness, such as tranquilizers, anti-histamines or anti-coagulants, should not use hot tubs.