



**University of Massachusetts  
Amherst**  
117 Draper Hall  
40 Campus Center Way  
Amherst, MA 01003-9244

Environmental Health and Safety

Voice: 413-545-2682  
Fax: 413-545-2600  
[www.ehs.umass.edu](http://www.ehs.umass.edu)

Position Statement on the banning of Hoverboards on Campus  
Environmental Health and Safety [EH&S]  
January 5, 2016 revised January 6, 2016

Given the nationwide concern over the safety of hoverboards (also known as self-balancing scooters and hands-free segways), it is the recommendation of Environmental Health and Safety that UMass institute a campus-wide temporary ban while the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) investigates complaints of injuries and spontaneous combustion of the devices.

The CPSC said in December it was investigating reports of a dozen hoverboard-related fires in a total of 10 states, including in a Gaithersburg, Md., home. The devices have been blamed for destructive house fires in Lafitte, La., Chappaqua, New York and elsewhere. Currently there is no safety standard in place for hoverboards. **CPSC also said it has logged about 40 emergency room visits related to falls and physical accidents, “with the range of those incidents being an open head wound, fractures to the arm and hand and other trauma to the arms and legs,”**

By instituting this ban UMass is joining a growing number of universities, including most recently American University, LSU and GW, that have banned hoverboards. AU has noted that: “Effective January 4, 2016, and until further notice, hoverboards, also known as self-balancing scooters and hands-free Segways will not be permitted on campus or in any AU-owned building.” (Washington Post, January 4, 2016). George Washington University, whose ban on the devices — [announced in December \[2015\]](#) — went into effect Jan. 1, 2016. The GW statement includes the following: “Starting Jan. 1, 2016, the George Washington University will prohibit self-balancing scooters, more popularly known as hoverboards, because of recent concerns by the [Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) and the potential impact these devices may have on campus safety.

Hoverboards *include self-balancing scooters, battery operated scooters, and hands-free Segways*. If you own one, please make sure that the device is not brought to campus when returning from winter break. Several safety and consumer agencies are investigating numerous fires and injuries related to these devices.

As you return to campus after the holiday season, remember that campus safety is a community responsibility. Please be aware of potential hazards and be mindful of others by not introducing potential hazards to the community.”

Per Robert Casparius, UMass Dartmouth has already instituted a ban on hoverboards in residence halls and may extend it to the entire campus. UMass Lowell has not to date instituted a ban but Glenn MacDonald, the EH&S Director at UMass Lowell, is in favor of a ban.

It is further recommended that the UMass Amherst ban on hoverboards be instituted as soon as possible and in advance of students returning from semester break.

EH&S will continue to monitor the situation and reevaluate this position statement based upon the recommendations of CPSC.

Donald A. Robinson, PhD  
Executive Director  
Environmental Health and Safety  
Revised 1-6-16