



Yard Sales: Dangerous Items Are No Bargain at Any Price

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MADISON – Yard sale signs are popping up around the state. You may find yourself slowing down as you cross your neighborhood, peeking into garages and scanning driveways for deals. These sales may be a bargain shopper’s paradise, but safety, not cost, should be your top concern when assessing whether to purchase a second-hand item.

“When it comes to products offered through rummage or yard sales, the assessment of an item’s safety is the responsibility of the buyer,” said Frank Frassetto, Administrator for DATCP’s Division of Trade and Consumer Protection. “You may not be able to return a defective or problematic purchase, so if an item looks unsafe, put it back. The cost savings are not worth the risk.”

While all second-hand items need to be cautiously evaluated, this guidance is particularly important for children’s items such as cribs, play yards, toys and more. These items tend to be “big gets” at yard sales, but require caution and recall research. The United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) recalls scores of toys and other products for children each year if they have the potential of causing serious injury or death. Products for any age group may be recalled for a variety of reasons including fire hazards, strangulation hazards, missing warning labels, electrocution hazards, lead levels in paint, loose magnets, choking hazards, fall risks and more.

To make it easier for consumers to keep abreast of the latest federal recalls on children’s items, DATCP offers its monthly "**Keep Your Kids Safe**" e-newsletter. Find back issues on the [DATCP website](#) or [sign up to receive these newsletters](#) by email.

Two other areas where shoppers tend to seek second-hand deals are tools and electronics. If you are shopping for battery-powered items, check the battery compartment for signs of corrosion. For electrical items, keep an eye out for frayed wires or questionable repair jobs on cords. If you are able to test these items on-site, run them through their paces before you turn over your cash.

As shoppers are ultimately responsible for discovering if an item is subject to a recall, get ready before you go. Search for recalls on items you are “on the hunt” for on the CPSC website at <https://www.cpsc.gov>. Having the website open on your smartphone while you shop is a good practice. The major app stores also contain recall apps that allow you to search on the spot using your mobile device.

For additional information or to file a complaint, visit the Consumer Protection Bureau at datcp.wisconsin.gov, call the Consumer Protection Hotline at 800-422-7128 or send an e-mail to datcp@wisconsin.gov.

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