



Family sues Walmart, hoverboard maker in fire that killed 2 Hellertown girls

Jaccii Farris Sep 21, 2022

PHILADELPHIA - A Hellertown family is suing two companies over a charging hoverboard that they say sparked the fire that tore through their home in April, causing the deaths of two girls.

The Kaufmans sued Walmart and Jetson Electric Bikes in federal court Wednesday, saying the companies knew or should have known the hoverboard batteries can short circuit and cause fires while charging, said **Kline & Specter law firm**, representing the family.

The fire broke out around 1 a.m. on April 1, and sisters Brianna Baer, 15, and Abigail Kaufman, 10, were trapped on the second floor of their Linden Avenue home. Firefighters pulled them out, but both died at the hospital.

Their mother escaped from the first floor and their father was in the garage at the time, as the smoke and flames quickly spread.

The lawsuit claims the Jetson Rogue Hoverboard, which was purchased at Walmart, had a "defective and unreasonably dangerous design," but the companies continued to market, sell and advertise it. It also says the hoverboard was not properly tested before being sold, the law firm said.

Walmart issued a statement Wednesday: "Our thoughts go out to the Kaufman family for their loss. We expect our suppliers to provide safe, quality products that meet all applicable laws and regulations. We will respond with the Court as appropriate after we are served with the complaint."

The Northampton County district attorney had said the cause of the fire was electrical in nature.

The girls died of smoke inhalation and burns, and their deaths were ruled accidental, the coroner said in April. Investigators say there were smoke detectors in the home, but due to the extent of damage, it's not known if they were working.