

**PAINTBALL GUN CONTROL**

Adopted by Convention Delegates May 5, 1993

*Reviewed by Board of Managers July 2012*

- WHEREAS, The California State PTA believes that the safety and welfare of our children depend on securing laws that protect them, whenever possible, from death, serious accidents and injury; and
- WHEREAS, There is serious concern about the growing use of paintball guns by minors and the increasing number of injuries resulting from this use; and
- WHEREAS, Paintball guns are not toys and cannot be legally purchased by anyone under eighteen; and
- WHEREAS, Parents are responsible for and are liable, under California law, for acts of their minor children; and
- WHEREAS, Paintball guns resemble actual firearms and, therefore, could result in accidental death or injury to a minor child by law enforcement personnel and others who believe that their lives are in jeopardy; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA urge its units, councils and districts to educate parents, students, and their respective communities about the possible dangers to children and youth from paintball guns; and to monitor the use and misuse of paintball guns within their communities; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA urge units, councils and districts to seek enactment and enforcement of regulations in their respective communities limiting the use of paintball guns; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA seek and support legislation to require all manufacturers of paintball guns to attach safety information and warnings to the paintball guns prior to their sale, and to require vendors to comply with manufacturers' recommendations regarding the sale and use of paintball guns; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA seek and support legislation that would prohibit the sale of carbon dioxide canisters and paintballs to persons under the age of 18.

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## BACKGROUND SUMMARY

**Paintball** is a sport that has grown significantly during the past decade. People armed with paintguns, which are powered by carbon dioxide cylinders, shoot paintballs at other players in war game simulations. Figures supplied by the International Paintball Players Association (IPPA) estimate that the paintball industry is growing by 15 to 20% each year, and that nearly one million persons participate in the United States each year.

Participants in paintball games recognize that this is a hazardous sport. The IPPA Safety Guidelines mandate eye protection for anyone exposed to shooting areas when paintguns are discharged. Their safety guidelines are stringent: Goggle lenses must be at least 0.6” thick, without cracks, and the goggle frame must be secure, with a secure headband. This is evidence that the goggle/shield system is intended to provide a seal around the eyes to protect against a direct impact from a paintball shell. Players are encouraged to protect their head, neck and groin areas, and field operators are supposed to discourage direct shooting at these areas.

As the popularity of paintball has increased, the use of paintball guns and paintpistols in non-sport settings also has increased, and this has resulted in injuries to children. On Halloween night, 1992, an eleven-year-old boy was shot in the right eye with a paintpistol used by a teenager. Surgery and a lens implant were necessary to save his vision. Several other children were also injured the same night; they suffered skin welts where they were hit. There have been other incidents of paintball gun-caused injuries, and reports of paintball gun vandalism.

The Palos Verdes Council of PTAs’ study on the informal use of paintball guns showed that thirteen- and fourteen-year-olds have their own paintball guns and play with them in areas behind their houses. Since paintball guns are classified as firearms, they may not be legally sold to anyone under the age of eighteen. Some communities control the use of paintball guns by enforcing the firearms regulation.

The problem of indiscriminate use of paintball guns and resulting injuries and property damage can be alleviated by a two-step program:

- requiring manufacturers to attach safety information and warnings to paintball guns before shipping them for sale;
- requiring vendors to comply with manufacturers’ recommendations regarding sale and use of paintball guns.

In addition, if PTAs will urge their local communities to enforce the firearms law regarding paintball guns, the indiscriminate use should decrease. PTAs also must educate parents, students and the community about the possible dangers to children from indiscriminate use of paintball guns. Parents must be informed about the legal classification of paintball guns as firearms and their responsibility, under California law, for injuries to individuals and damage to property caused by their children.