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# Serious Injuries Result When Exploding Ceramic Gel Pots Send Flaming Gel Fuel Flying



A ceramic fire pot blew up, splattering Michael Reyer with flaming gel fuel. (ABC News) AUTO START: ON | OFF



By ELISABETH LEAMY

June 13, 2011

**The Reyer family of Long Island, NY, was preparing to celebrate life. Now they're trying to ward off death.**

**Nancy Reyer's 14-year-old son, Michael Hubbard, was helping set up for his aunt's wedding celebration in Riverhead on May 28 when the family says a ceramic fire pot blew up, splattering him with flaming gel fuel.**

**"Now my son's with third-degree burns on his face and he might not live," Nancy Reyer said, sobbing. "We're all laughing and having a good time, it was really nice and then**

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**... my nephew didn't know that the candle was lit and he poured some of the liquid and it just exploded, and all I saw was a flash and my son went up in flames."**

**Michael's condition is now grave, his organs threatening to shut down as he struggles for his life at Stony Brook University Medical Center on Long Island.**

**"It looked like it was going to be a nice little candle that would sit on a nice display. We had no idea we were buying a bomb," Fran Reyer-Johnson, Michael's aunt, told "Good Morning America."**

**In Michael's case – and others -- the victims say the fire seemed to be out, so they added more fuel. That caused an explosion of flaming gel that they say stuck to their bodies like napalm and was incredibly hard to put out.**

**Fire departments around the country say it's a hazardous new product category.**

**The product that caused Michael's accident and two others in the past few weeks is the FireBurners ceramic pot with fire gel fuel, sold by Napa Home and Garden. The company told the New York Times it asked its retailer, Bed Bath & Beyond, to stop selling the product on Friday.**

**But at a store in Maryland, we easily found several fire pots and fuel bottles right on the shelves. The most vivid warning about the danger of adding more fuel is printed on a piece of packaging that you throw away.**

**Napa said in a published interview that it's only heard a handful of complaints out of tens of thousands of products sold and that it now plans to put bigger, better warnings on its products.**

**"To me it's gasoline in a can. It's very dangerous ... We need to take it off the market ... it's a lethal weapon," Nancy Reyer said.**

**We asked Napa Home and Garden and Bed Bath & Beyond for comment. Bed Bath & Beyond sent us this statement:**

**"The safety of our customers and our associates is of paramount importance to us. So in an abundance of caution and pending our investigation, Bed Bath & Beyond has instructed its stores nationwide to suspend selling this product."**

**Napa Home and Garden reaffirmed its intention to pull the**



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**products off the market while it reevaluates its warning labels. To see Napa's complete statement [click here](#).**

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**gateacher1**  
12:53 PM EDT  
Aug 02, 2011

***My name is Angie and I am a third grade teacher in Georgia. This too happened to me. I was sitting around a patio table with a fire pot. When my friend went to put the gel into the EMPTY pot, the gel burst into a fiereball of flames onto my body. These are timebombs being sold. They are extreemley dangerous. My husband and friend were luckily right there and put me out. I was later airlifted to nearest burn unit where I stayed for several nights. I had 2nd degree burns on 10% of my body. I had to have human skin placed onto my body. This is a terrible tragedy***

***for all of my family and for the family we were visiting. It has devastated our lives. It will be months before I can return to teach. I pray that if one person reads this and throws their gel and pot away maybe this can be prevented in the future.***

**deleane57**

3:24 PM EDT  
Jun 16, 2011

***After reading over these again, it does seem like most problems have been caused by someone pouring fuel in not knowing it was lit. Once again, my fire was not caused by fuel being poured in. The pot over heated and shot the cyclinder out and it landed in a upholstered patio chair and caught fire. I read another that stated something similar to the same as mine. Obviously, there are several issues where these pots are concerned and should be considered very dangerous. We were so blessed that no one was injured and the fire was contained to damage on a screen porch and attic only. My heart goes out to those with injured relatives/friends. These pots although beautiful while burning, are so very dangerous and need to be removed from the market. Let's not wait until another injury or possibly a death to do so!!***

**bsagucio**

12:59 PM EDT  
Jun 16, 2011

***Thank-you to oonogil for his thoughts and observations on the pots. @ evrything, irish, tarah, and sgreg: First of all, it has nothing to do with people having "something missing from their life. . .," nor does everyone speaking for the product not have compassion for any of the burn victims. . . This is a public forum and this news story decided to target a product/company. I feel for anyone who sustained injuries from these products, regardless of the reason. That being said, a report such as this could cause the discontinuation of a product, possibly resulting in job losses. As I said before, my partner works in marketing for a group that carries Napa's products, but they are only one line the group carries. His job is completely safe but others may not be. So then someone can report another news story on the families that have no money for food, shelter, etc and we can have something else to feel bad and cry about. It comes down to this: there are safety concerns with any product and most arise from how they are used. Rather than jump to the extreme of, "This product needs to be pulled and discontinued," share the knowledge of what went wrong with your experiences so others can avoid the same mistake. From what everyone has said, the problem comes from pouring more of the gel into the pot when it was perceived to be out and was not. Alright, so it's clear that safety warnings need to be modified and made more clearly visible. Perhaps the manufacturer will look into changing the design, perhaps not. Yes, their will be strong emotions from the families of anyone who has had injured loved ones and those should not be ignored or glossed over. I believe if there was a high ratio of number of accidents to number of pots sold, this would be a different story, but I do not think that is the case.***



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