**Galaxy Note 7 Owners Are Urged to Stop Using Their Phones**

**By CECILIA KANG**

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WASHINGTON — The fallout over the potential for Samsung Galaxy Note 7 smartphones to catch fire is intensifying.

On Friday, the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission urged owners of the smartphone to power down their Galaxy Note 7 devices and stop using them altogether.

“C.P.S.C. and Samsung are working cooperatively to formally announce an official recall of the devices as soon as possible,” the agency said in a statement. “C.P.S.C. is working quickly to determine whether a replacement Galaxy Note 7 is an acceptable remedy for Samsung or their phone carriers to provide to consumers.”

The C.P.S.C. is the main consumer product safety agency in the United States, with broad oversight over toys, tractors, appliances and electronics. This year, the C.P.S.C. recalled hoverboards that contained lithium-ion batteries; those batteries exploded or caught fire in dozens of cases.

The commission’s statement is the latest blow to Samsung and the Galaxy Note 7, which became available only two weeks ago. This month, Samsung said it would recall 2.5 million of the devices because of an issue with the lithium-ion batteries in the phones, which can catch fire and explode. The problem had affected 35 devices globally as of last week.

Samsung said it was voluntarily recalling the phones and “conducting a thorough inspection with our suppliers to identify possible affected batteries in the market.”

Air safety regulators worldwide have since advised passengers not to charge or turn on the smartphones inside an aircraft. Three Australian airlines have banned them. On Thursday, the Federal Aviation Administration also said it “strongly” advised passengers onboard planes not to use the Galaxy Note 7.

In a statement on Friday, Tim Baxter, president of Samsung Electronics America said, “We are asking users to power down their Galaxy Note 7s and exchange them now.”

The recall comes at a tricky time for Samsung. The Galaxy is one of the South Korean company’s most visible consumer product lines, and its smartphones compete with the Apple iPhone for pre-eminence with consumers. This week, Apple unveiled its newest smartphones, the iPhone 7 and 7 Plus, which will ship later this month.

It was unclear if Samsung would provide refunds for Galaxy Note 7 customers who did not want a replacement provided by the company. All four major wireless carriers in the United States — Verizon, AT&T, T-Mobile and Sprint — have halted sales of the Galaxy Note 7 and have been given instructions to help owners make an exchange, Samsung said.

While the recall of the Galaxy Note 7 is Samsung’s largest voluntary recall, it is not the biggest on record. In 2007, Nokia announced a recall of 46 million cellphone batteries. In 2006, Dell recalled 4.1 million lithium-ion batteries for notebook computers.

Maria Rerecich, director of electronics testing for Consumer Reports, said the number of people affected by Samsung’s recall was small but showed “a serious potential safety hazard.”