AmazonBasics products are going up in flames, but not enough for Amazon to stop selling them

Many AmazonBasics products that have been reported as fire hazards are still for sale on Amazon, according to an extensive investigation by CNN.

Some of the stories about the dangerous products are harrowing. In one, a man went to the hospital after his chair caught fire while he was sleeping, apparently due to a melted USB cord. An AmazonBasics microwave caught fire when an eight-year-old heated up a macaroni and cheese cup. One man saw fire coming from an AmazonBasics surge protector while only a single phone charger was plugged into it – as his baby slept in a room nearby.

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Reports have apparently been piling up for years. CNN counted at least 1,500 reviews since 2016 for more than 70 items that described "products exploding, catching on fire, smoking, melting, causing electrical malfunctions or otherwise posing risks."

Amazon has taken down some of the items that customers reported to be dangerous, like the USB cable and the surge protector, though many still remain on the site, CNN says:

> *Within the more than 1,500 reviews, many consumers explicitly called out items as potentially dangerous – using terms such as "hazard" or "fire" or saying the product should be*

> *recalled. Around 30 items with three or more reviews like this remain for sale on Amazon.com today. At least 11 other products that fit this criteria were no longer for sale at the time of publication. Some became unavailable after CNN began its reporting, and at least four product pages were removed from the retailer's site entirely — leaving behind dead URLs known by employees as "dog pages." Amazon confirmed that at least eight of these products had been under investigation, but said the company determined they all met its safety standards.*

Despite the many reported safety issues, however, Amazon has only ever issued two official recalls of AmazonBasics products, according to CNN. The federal Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has only received at least 10 reports over eight years that mention an AmazonBasics product with concerns similar to those in the reviews CNN analyzed.

When confronted by CNN, Amazon pointed to specific reasons why certain products met its safety standards or — in a few cases — how it had removed them after reports. (The USB cable apparently met Amazon's standards but was removed at some point as well.)

Amazon has come under frequent scrutiny over selling defective products in the past — *The Verge* counted more than 60 federal lawsuits over product liability toward Amazon in the past decade in a January report.

CNN's investigation is worth reading in full, which also includes interviews with former Amazon employees discussing the measures taken to test for safety issues in AmazonBasics products.

https://www.theverge.com/2020/9/10/21431085/amazon-basics-amazonbasics-dangerous-flammable-products