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U.S. Warning Labels Urge Buyers to BEWARE...OF EVERYTHING

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If you read the warning labels on a lot of toys, household appliances and other gadgets sold in the United States, you'd have to conclude that Americans have no common sense at all. Manufacturers are apparently worried that average people will do stupid things with their products, hurt themselves, and blame the company.

So . . . they slap warning labels on just about everything. The messages say something like: "You're REALLY dumb. So pay attention: Don't take this toaster into the bathtub with you." Or . . . "Don't operate this airplane unless you've had flying lessons."

Each year, an organization called the Michigan Lawsuit Abuse Watch picks the wackiest warning labels. Here are three from 2004:

On a child's scooter: "This product moves when used."

On a kitchen blender that whips, chops, and dices: "Never remove food from the blades while the product is operating."

And this one, on a medical thermometer: "Once used rectally, the thermometer should not be used orally."

There are thousands more examples, like the label on a curling iron that reads, "For External Use Only." Or the sign on a mail truck that says, "Look before driving."

How about this one, on a box of hammers. Hammers!! "May be harmful if swallowed." No kidding!

Here's another good one, on a package of rat poison: "Warning: Has Been Found to Cause Cancer in Laboratory Mice."

And think about this one, seen at a railroad station: "Beware. To touch these wires is instant death. Anyone found doing so will be prosecuted."

So if you have a chance to come to America, consider yourself warned: Don't touch anything!

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