

Minister for Fair Trading
Minister for Citizenship
Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts

Virginia Judge MP



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STATEWIDE BLITZ NETS 164 DANGEROUS TOYS AND OTHER PRODUCTS

A statewide sweep of retailers and markets by Office of Fair Trading inspectors has resulted in 164 dangerous toys and Christmas products being removed from sale in NSW.

Fair Trading Minister Virginia Judge said checks were conducted annually in the lead up to Christmas to ensure toys and products did not pose a safety risk to children and consumers.

“Consumers have the right to expect the goods they purchase are of merchantable quality and safe for use,” Ms Judge said.

“When it comes to the safety of our children, Government, manufacturers, retailers and parents must remain vigilant to ensure that products won’t cause injury or death,” she said.

Fair Trading inspectors examined thousands of products on the shelves of 476 retail outlets (mostly discount variety stores and markets) in more than 100 towns across NSW.

While 75 per cent of the stores specifically targeted for attention did not have any non-compliant products during this year’s survey, 164 toys and other products, including Christmas decorations, failed to meet NSW’s stringent product safety standards.

Rigorous testing showed these toys present a potentially fatal inhalation or ingestion hazard due to small parts, including 67 battery operated toys and 14 squeeze toys.

Another 14 non-compliant products were projectile toys that either had the potential to cause significant eye injury or had projectiles of a size that may present an inhalation or ingestion hazard.

“Of most concern to me were the 121 toys specifically marketed to parents as being suitable for children under three years of age,” Ms Judge said.

“One toy we’ve taken off the shelves – a 12 piece ‘Baby Plaything’ toy set – shows a picture of a young baby on the packaging,” Ms Judge said.

“While it also carries a warning that it is not suitable for use by children under three, loving parents and grandparents could have been easily misled into buying it.

“It’s a disgrace.

“I have a clear message for manufacturers, suppliers and retailers – Fair Trading’s Investigation and Enforcement Division will continue the hunt for dangerous products over the coming weeks to ensure these and other unsafe products remain off the shelves and away from young children,” she said.

Manufacturers, suppliers and retailers are required by law to ensure the products they supply are safe. They are responsible for content testing, quality assurance, compliance with relevant standards and obtaining approvals as required.

Suppliers who breach sections 27 and 32 of the *Fair Trading Act 1987* (supplying or selling unsafe products), face stiff penalties, with maximum fines of \$22,000 for individuals and \$110,000 for corporations.

“Each trader found to be supplying non-compliant products is being investigated and appropriate enforcement will take place,” Ms Judge said.

Last year’s survey resulted in action being taken against 42 suppliers, with 10 suppliers prosecuted, 22 cautions issued (for first offenders) and 10 penalty notices issued.

Ms Judge said consumers could report any concerns to the Office of Fair Trading on **13 32 20**.

“It is so important that we only buy children age-appropriate toys, read warning labels and check that older siblings don’t leave potentially dangerous toys lying around that toddlers can pick up and put in their mouth,” Ms Judge said.

“The rule of thumb is the smaller the child, the bigger the toy.

“Any toy containing small pieces that breaks after being dropped, twisted or pulled can cause potential injury or death to a small child,” she said.

Fair Trading’s *Toy Safety Checklist* lists features parents should look for when buying toys, including:

- Check for sharp edges or rough surfaces as they can cause cuts and splinters.
- Buy washable, non-breakable toys for babies. Anything small enough to fit into a 35mm film canister can choke a child under three years old.
- Buy toy chests and boxes designed not to close on top of children. They should have a removable lid. Anything big enough to crawl inside must have ventilation holes.
- Read the age labeling on new toys. 'Not suitable for children under three' means that there are small parts that could be swallowed. It is not an indication of skill level or intelligence.
- Check that there are no gaps or holes that could entrap a child's fingers.
- Only choose projectile toys that have soft, one-piece darts or non-removable suction caps.
- Be wary of toys that make loud noises as they can be harmful to hearing, particularly toys that are held against the ear, such as walkie talkies and toy mobile phones.
- Check for ventilation before buying tents, masks, helmets etc.
- Ensure that ride-on toys are appropriate to the age of the child and are stable. Toy bikes should have effective brakes that can be applied by the rider.
- Check toys that contain magnets to ensure they have not come loose. Remove loose magnets from the toy box.

“The checklist is available by visiting the website, www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au or calling Fair Trading on **13 32 20**.

Photographs (including explanatory details and brand names) of all non-compliant products can be viewed at www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au.

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