

# Media Release

**The Hon Gabrielle Williams MP**  
Minister for Government Services  
Minister for Consumer Affairs  
Minister for Public and Active Transport



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## HOCUS POCUS SAFETY FOCUS – TIPS FOR A SAFE HALLOWEEN

Victorians are being urged to keep safe this spooky season, as Halloween celebrations continue to gain popularity and consumers hit the shops to buy toys, costumes and cosmetics.

Consumer Affairs Victoria inspectors have seized dozens of items including spider necklaces, skulls, pumpkin lanterns, light up decorations, flashing monster badges and witches in a Halloween safety blitz.

Minister for Consumer Affairs Gabrielle Williams said with the proliferation of Halloween products on the market, families should be mindful of safety ahead of 31 October – and also when out trick or treating.

Light-up novelty toys and flashing objects such as pumpkin lanterns, cauldrons, fake candles, torches and wands are often powered by button batteries.

Every day in Australia, at least one child goes to hospital after ingesting one of these batteries. Warnings are now required on packaging or in the accompanying instructions, and packaging must also be child resistant.

When buying button battery-powered Halloween novelty toys, check the battery compartment is secured with a screw or similar fastener to prevent small children gaining access.

Costumes are a popular part of Halloween celebrations, but it's important to make sure they are clearly visible if you're wearing them outside.

If you're wearing black or other dark coloured costumes for Halloween, add glow sticks or a reflective strip to your costumes and carry a torch to ensure drivers and other trick-or-treaters can see you.

Take care around open heat sources such as jack-o-lanterns and heaters. You should also check costume labels for their fire risk and choose those marked "flame resistant" or "fire resistant".

If you're completing your look with fake tattoos, face paint, makeup or fake blood, ensure they come with ingredients labels, and keep them handy throughout the night. If someone in your group has an allergic reaction to a product, having a list of ingredients available for doctors can save them vital time.

If you suspect a child has swallowed or inserted a button battery, immediately call the Poisons Information Centre on 13 11 26. If your child is having any difficulty breathing, call Triple Zero (000).

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Consumer Affairs Gabrielle Williams

*"Halloween is growing in popularity and thousands of kids and adults will be out having a ghoulish good time on the 31<sup>st</sup> – but it's important everyone does so safely."*

*"Dodgy products are not only annoying, they can also be harmful or dangerous. Consumer Affairs Victoria takes product safety seriously and will continue to remove non-compliant or dangerous products from shelves."*