

Media Release

The Hon Nick Staikos MP
Minister for Consumer Affairs
Minister for Local Government



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'TIS THE SEASON FOR SAFE SHOPPING

The Allan Labor Government is reminding shoppers to look out for dangerous products this Christmas, with Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) inspecting stores across the state to ensure mandatory safety standards are met.

Minister for Consumer Affairs Nick Staikos and Director of Consumer Affairs Victoria Nicole Rich today urged retailers and shoppers to keep product safety front of mind this festive season, offering examples of recently seized items and tips on how the public can spot these dangerous products this silly season.

Since November, product safety officers have conducted 111 store inspections across Victoria, ordering retailers to remove from sale more than 1,000 products that failed to meet mandatory safety and information standards.

Officers also seized 82 unsafe items posing a serious health risk, such as Christmas decorations with unsecured button batteries, which are especially dangerous if swallowed by children, as they can burn through the oesophagus and lead to serious injury or even death.

Also seized were items such as press-on nails without an adhesive ingredients list, and therefore in breach of cosmetics labelling standards. These lists ensure shoppers can make informed decisions and avoid potential harm from toxins and irritants that can cause chemical burns and severe allergic reactions.

Officers will continue to work with retailers right up to Christmas Day to remove unsafe products from shelves and conduct follow-up inspections to make sure retailers can show items have been fixed or permanently removed from sale. Extremely dangerous items are seized on the spot.

Shoppers can help keep their families safe by checking for safety warnings, carefully reading ingredient lists, reviewing product recalls and, importantly, making sure button batteries in toys and other products are secure.

Product safety officers also have powers to issue on the spot fines of \$5,000 for non-compliance, while serious and repeated breaches of product safety laws can lead to court action and penalties of up to \$2.5 million for individuals and \$50 million for companies.

Victorians with concerns about the sale of unsafe products can call CAV's product safety hotline on 1300 36 48 94 or visit consumer.vic.gov.au

Quotes attributable to Minister for Consumer Affairs Nick Staikos

"Whether you're delivering gifts, decorating or dressing up, the holidays should be a time of happiness, not hazards and hospital visits."

"We know that Christmas is a magical time and we want to keep it that way – that's why our inspectors are on the ground right up until Christmas Day working to ensure safety and peace of mind for both children and parents."

Quotes attributable to Director of Consumer Affairs Victoria Nicole Rich

"The pre-Christmas rush brings a surge in sales, which is why it's more important than ever for consumers and retailers to take extra care with the products they choose."

"Our product safety officers are visiting retailers all over Victoria in the lead up to Christmas to ensure that dangerous products are far away from the shelves."

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