

Media Release



Government of South Australia

Office of Consumer and
Business Affairs

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Information Services**

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Ban on toys with powerful lasers

Novelty items and toys that incorporate lasers with a power in excess of one milliwatt have been banned in South Australia. A declaration of dangerous goods which bans the supply and sale of such items has been issued today.

Consumer Affairs Manager, David Schomburgk says "Toys that incorporate powerful laser pointers have begun to creep into the South Australian marketplace, despite being restricted by Australian Customs regulations. It is crucial that this ban be introduced to protect consumers from these potentially dangerous items."

The Australian Customs Service restricts the import of articles incorporating laser pointers to lasers emitting a beam of less than 1 milliwatt in power, unless written authorisation has been granted. The ban complements the Customs regulations and also captures any locally manufactured products.

"Laser pointers that exceed the acceptable limit of one milliwatt have the potential to damage a person's eye. If aimed at a driver of a moving vehicle the laser could also distract and temporarily blind the driver, presenting other serious safety concerns."

Product safety inspectors from the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs (OCBA) have detected two toy guns with powerful laser pointers. One gun was to be sold at the Royal Adelaide Show and was seven times the acceptable level. The gun was removed from the show bag prior to the Show. The other toy gun was found during OCBA's pre-Christmas safety inspections and was twelve times the limit. The gun was immediately removed from sale.

The same item that was detected during the recent Christmas monitoring was found on sale at another store yesterday.

The declaration of dangerous goods is limited to novelty items and toys rather than all goods, as is stipulated in the Customs regulations. Items containing laser pointers that are used for legitimate purposes, such as in industry and health organisations, are not covered by the ban.

"Any supplier who sells a toy or novelty item with a laser pointer in excess of one milliwatt would be in breach of the Trade Standards Act 1979 which carries a maximum penalty of \$10,000."

Traders are advised to check their stock to make sure that items containing laser pointers comply with the ban, and if they are unsure about the laser power they should contact their suppliers.

OCBA inspectors will be monitoring stores to check that the banned items are not on sale.

A list of banned and dangerous goods can be found on the OCBA website (www.ocba.sa.gov.au).
To report any concerns contact OCBA's product safety section on 8152 0732.