

News Release

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Hon Gail Gago
Minister for State/Local Government
Relations
Minister for the Status of Women
Minister for Consumer Affairs
Minister Government Enterprises
Minister Ast Minister for Transport, Infrastructure & Energy

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NOVELTY LIGHTERS BANNED

Cigarette lighters that look like toys have been banned from sale in South Australia to prevent fires and burn injuries to children and adults.

Minister for Consumer Affairs Gail Gago says the novelty lighters are a hidden danger because they look more like toys than they do cigarette lighters.

“A child or even an adult holding one of the lighters may not realise that a flame could suddenly shoot out if they happen to flick the right switch,” says Minister Gago.

The lighters come in designs that are appealing to children, such as animals, cars and handbags. They are sold as loose items without any packaging to inform consumers that the products are actually lighters. The lighters have been sold at discount stores, tobacco stores and service stations.

The current mandatory safety standard requires lighters to have child resistant mechanisms, but unfortunately these systems aren't fool proof.

Minister Gago has declared toy-like lighters to be dangerous goods, which means that they are banned from sale in South Australia. Anyone who supplies a banned product risks a maximum \$10,000 fine under the *Trade Standards Act*. SA's ban mirrors one recently announced by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and it will allow state officials to also seize dangerous items and prosecute where necessary.

While the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs (OCBA) is not aware of any injuries or fires caused in SA as a result of these lighters, prevention is better than injury.

“It is just too dangerous for these novelty lighters to be available to the public. If a lighter is left lying around a child could pick it up without realising the hidden dangers,” says Minister Gago.

Consumers who have a toy-like lighter are urged to keep it out of children's reach and to dispose of it safely.

For more information about the ban contact OCBA's product safety section on 8152 0732 or 131 882 for country callers, or visit www.ocba.sa.gov.au