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CHRISTMAS CANDLES AND TOYS FAIL SAFETY TESTS

22 toys and novelty items have failed safety and labelling standards following an annual pre- Christmas monitoring program that saw thousands of items inspected by product safety officers.

Minister for Consumer Affairs, Jennifer Rankine, said the annual checks involved more rigorous testing of items given the high number of toys, which raised serious safety concerns across the globe this year.

“With many parents concerned about toys that could be potentially toxic or unsafe in some way, more resources have been allocated to safety testing during this period,” Ms Rankine said.

Product tests have included noise levels, age range suitability, flammability, small parts released, ingestion/inhalation hazards, lead, toxicity (particularly with bead toys) and compliance with safety standards.

Big stores, medium stores, and suppliers who supply small stores and novelty shops have all come under scrutiny.

Consumer Affairs has worked in cooperation with other state and national product safety regulators, to share information about dangerous items detected and to reduce the need for jurisdictions to test identical items. In South Australia alone, thousands of items have been inspected with over 150 items selected for further testing.

Items that failed tests include:

- Two Christmas candles surrounded by decorative greenery which could ignite
- A third candle which can begin a self sustaining fire
- Two children’s folding chairs and a chair set in which children’s fingers could easily become trapped
- A crocodile toy, mini blocks, wooden blocks, peg board and funny intelligence blocks that fail small parts tests for children aged under 3.
- A toy helicopter, drum, activity table, wind up train, counting toy, baby rattles, cartoon flier train set, mini piano, musical toy, intelligence funny toys, and a bucket of blocks with a car that easily breaks into small parts if dropped.

The majority of retailers have responded positively and have withdrawn the dangerous items from the shelves.

“However, any trader who offers these items for sale is risking a huge fine and loss of reputation, but is also putting people, particularly little ones, at risk of serious injury or even death,” Ms Rankine said.

“I would also like to remind people to use candles carefully this Christmas. They should never be left unattended, and wrapping paper, serviettes and other flammable materials should be stored well away from burning candles.”

People who have bought any of the failed items can return them together with some proof of purchase to the place they bought them and request a full refund. If people don't have proof of purchase they should contact Consumer Affairs on 8152 0732.

A list of banned and dangerous goods can be found at www.ocba.sa.gov.au