

Media Release

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Too hot to handle

Consumers trying to keep warm this winter could be in danger if they are using hot water bottles. The Office of Consumer and Business Affairs (OCBA) are investigating hot water bottles, as they are aware of some injuries and allegedly one death.

There are many hot water bottles on the market with various markings that indicate to consumers they comply with British industry standards. OCBA conducted testing on behalf of all the Product Safety agencies around Australia and the findings showed that very few bottles actually met the compliance claim. OCBA believes claims made by manufacturers may be false and misleading.

Commissioner for Consumer Affairs Mark Bodycoat said, "These results are alarming and OCBA will be working with other product safety agencies to develop an effective standard for hot water bottles."

There is currently no standard for hot water bottles in South Australia or Australia.

Testing has shown non-compliant bottles have failed in the following areas:

- thickness of the rubber
- opening needs to be a minimum of 18mm wide
- stoppers are too small
- labelling components

OCBA has contacted traders' who have been co-operative and have begun to remove non-compliant hot water bottles from shelves. Retailers such as Cheap as Chips, The Reject Shop, and Browse In and Save, have all removed their stock from sale. A major national distributor, Mayvic, has begun withdrawing affected hot water bottles Australia wide. Discussions with other traders are ongoing.

Consumers may wish to contact OCBA to seek advice on what to check for when purchasing a hot water bottle. Those who have recently purchased hot water bottles can return them to the store of purchase for a full refund.

"South Australia is the first state to test hot water bottles and our results will be used by all the other national product safety agencies in determining a standard."

Traders who are unsure of their own stock of hot water bottles should contact OCBA.

OCBA is interested in speaking to anyone has had a hot water bottle split, break or has been injured. These consumers are encouraged to contact OCBA on 8204 9777.

OCBA regularly monitors products that are available for sale across the State. A list of banned and dangerous goods can be found on the OCBA website (www.ocba.sa.gov.au). Consumers and traders are encouraged to visit the website to check that particular products are safe, or telephone 8152 0732 or 131 882 for regional callers if they have any concerns.



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