



Product safety bulletin

Children's toys containing magnets

June 2010



New mandatory standard

The ACCC is keen to alert suppliers to the requirements of the new mandatory consumer product safety standard for children's toys containing magnets.

In response to safety hazards presented by children's toys containing magnets, a new mandatory standard was declared on 16 February 2010.

This standard comes into effect on 1 July 2010. This means that after that date, suppliers of children's toys must comply with the requirements of the new mandatory standard.

This bulletin provides information on hazards relating to magnets in children's toys, and assists suppliers to meet their compliance responsibilities under the new mandatory standard.

Children's toys containing magnets

The new mandatory standard for children's toys containing magnets applies to all toys that:

- are supplied new and are designed for or clearly intended for use in play by children under the age of 14 years
- contain hazardous small magnets, including those which are loose, attached to or embedded in components of toys.

A hazardous small magnet is a magnet which has a flux index (the magnetic strength) greater than 50 kg²mm² and is any of the following shapes and sizes:

- a cylinder with a length of not more than 32 mm and a diameter of not more than 11 mm
- a disc with a diameter of not more than 26 mm and a thickness of not more than 5 mm
- a sphere with a diameter of not more than 22 mm
- any combination of the shapes and dimensions listed above.

Excluded products

The new mandatory standard does not apply to:

- magnets used in motors, relays, speakers, electrical components and similar devices unintended for use in play.

Other excluded products are:

- sporting goods
- camping goods
- bicycles
- playground equipment
- trampolines
- electronic game units
- models powered by combustion or steam engines
- fashion jewellery for children.

Hazards

A 20-month-old child died in the United States of America as a result of swallowing a number of strong magnets which caused intestinal injuries.

In 2006 a nine-year-old New South Wales boy required surgery for intestine perforations and bowel obstruction after he ingested several strong magnets from toys.

In January 2009, Mater Hospital in Queensland reported they had treated three cases where children aged between four and 11 years had ingested strong magnets that caused multiple intestine/bowel perforations requiring surgery.

Data collected from Victorian hospital emergency departments by the Monash University Accident Research Centre over the period 2004 to 2008 showed that there were 39 cases where children ingested magnets. While the Victorian cases did not involve serious injuries, they demonstrate that children are likely to ingest small hazardous magnets if they are accessible.

The mandatory standard

The new mandatory standard is based on Australian and New Zealand Standard AS/NZS ISO 8124.1:2002 *Safety of toys Part 1 – 'Safety aspects related to mechanical and physical properties'* and Amendment 2 to AS/NZS ISO 8124.1.

For complete information about this mandatory standard, you must read:

- Consumer Protection Notice No. 5 of 2010.
- AS/NZS ISO 8124.1:2002, available from SAI Global (www.saiglobal.com).
- Amendment 2 to AS/NZS ISO 8124.1, available from SAI Global.

Understanding all three documents is vital to ensuring that you and your business meet all the requirements of this mandatory standard.

Requirements

Where a toy includes a hazardous small magnet, the packaging and instructions must include the following words or words to the same effect:

Warning! The product contains small magnet(s). Swallowed magnets can stick together across intestines causing serious infections and death. Seek immediate medical attention if magnet(s) are swallowed or inhaled.

Hazardous small magnets must not come loose after being subjected to tests which have been designed to simulate structural damage as a result of dropping, pulling, twisting and other actions likely to be performed by a child.

Your responsibilities as a supplier

From 1 July 2010, all suppliers of children's toys containing magnets must meet the requirements of the mandatory standard. Suppliers include:

- manufacturers
- importers
- distributors
- retailers.

It is an offence under the *Trade Practices Act 1974* to supply products which do not comply with the requirements of the mandatory standard. Failure to comply can result in recalls, legal action and/or penalties.

Contact

For more information about mandatory standards, bans, recalls and emerging issues—and to subscribe to email alerts and RSS feeds—visit our websites:

productsafety.gov.au

recalls.gov.au

You can also follow us on Twitter: twitter.com/productsafetyau

ACCC Infocentre: 1300 302 502

Callers who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment can contact us through the National Relay Service: relayservice.com.au

Voice-only (speak and listen) users phone: 1300 555 727 and ask for 1300 302 502

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