

GOVERNMENT ISSUES ONLINE SALES PRODUCT SAFETY MESSAGE

News story

The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) has issued a warning to UK consumers, highlighting the product safety risks when shopping online.



OPSS, part of the Dept for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, has issued the Important Product Safety Message in the run up to Christmas, asking the public to check who they are buying from.

Many consumers may be unaware that online platforms are not always the seller of the products on their websites but often act as an intermediary between an independent company and the buyer. And that buying products from businesses based overseas or who fail to provide an address, increases the risks.

As more and more shoppers use online platforms, so too do unscrupulous sellers, supplying unsafe products and offering no support when things go wrong.

OPSS is therefore issuing a Safety Checklist for anyone purchasing products through online platforms:

- Are you buying directly from an Online Platform or is it a third-party seller?
- What do you know about the seller's reputation for selling safe goods?
- Is the seller based in the UK?
- Does the seller provide a name and address for you to contact?

OPSS issued a Safety Alert earlier this year warning of the dangers from swallowing small, high-powered magnets, following a number of serious incidents involving children and young people. In many cases, these products were sourced from overseas via online platforms.

OPSS Chief Executive Graham Russell said:

We are seeing a rise in the use of online marketplaces by consumers across the UK. At the same time, there is too much evidence of non compliant products being sold by third party sellers. I urge consumers to be cautious and identify who and where they are buying from.

OPSS is already identifying products that pose a serious risk but are still available online, working with local Trading Standards requiring Online Platforms to ensure they are removed from sale. More than 10,000 unsafe products including toys have been taken down from online platforms in 2021 alone.

[OPSS product safety message poster](#)

Published 10 November 2021