

Hong Kong Customs alerts public on two unsafe soother holders (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs today (April 9) reminded members of the public to stay alert to two models of unsafe soother holders. Test results indicated that the fasteners and straps of the two models posed suffocation and strangulation risks. To avoid an accident, parents should immediately stop the use of those two soother holders by their young children. Traders should also remove the soother holders concerned from their shelves.

Customs earlier received a referral from a related organisation that suspected unsafe soother holders were being supplied on the market. Customs officers immediately test-purchased two models of soother holders from two related retailers respectively for safety testing. Test results revealed that the fasteners of the two models protruded past the base of two test guides simulating the oral cavity of young children but no ventilation hole was provided. The detachable soother fastener of one model also passed completely another test guide simulating the mouth size of infants, posing a danger of suffocation if accidentally swallowed. Another model had a maximum length exceeding the limit of safety standard's requirement under tensile test, posing a danger of strangulation. Also, such a model failed to bear the identification markings and bilingual warnings or cautions prescribed in the Toys and Children's Products Safety Ordinance (TCPSO). In addition, the two models failed to provide safety labelling prescribed in the safety standard such as warnings and instructions for use.

Customs later conducted operations and searched the premises of retailers and wholesalers in connection with the case. No suspected unsafe soother holders of the same models were found. The prohibition notices were served to prohibit the continued sale of the two models by the two retailers and related wholesalers.

Investigations are ongoing.

Customs reminds members of the public to observe the following safety tips when purchasing and using soother holders:

- Pay attention to and follow the instructions associated with the soother holders;
- Check carefully before each use. Throw away at the first sign of damage or weakness;
- Never lengthen the straps of the soother holders;
- Never attach them to cords, ribbons, laces or loose parts of clothing to prevent young children from being at risk of strangulation; and
- Stay constantly vigilant on the use of such products by young children to ensure their safety.

Customs is committed to the protection of consumer safety and regularly conducts spot checks and safety tests on toys and children's products to ensure that they are reasonably safe for use by consumers.

Under the TCPSO, it is an offence to import, manufacture or supply unsafe toys or children's products. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$100,000 and imprisonment for one year on first conviction, and a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for two years on a subsequent conviction.

Members of the public may report information relating to suspected unsafe toys or children's products via Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002/).

