

Hong Kong Customs alerts public on unsafe toy expandable plastic beads (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs today (September 2) reminded members of the public to stay alert to an unsafe model of toy expandable plastic beads. Test results indicated that the toy could pose suffocation risks to children. To avoid an accident, parents should immediately stop their children from playing with the toy. Traders should also remove the toy from their shelves.

Customs officers earlier test-purchased a model of toy expandable plastic beads for safety testing from a toys and stationery retailer in Tuen Mun. Test results revealed that the expansion in diameter of the plastic beads exceeded the allowable expansion limit in the safety standard by more than four times after being soaked in water, which could pose a risk of suffocation if swallowed by children.

Customs later conducted an operation and searched the toys and stationery retailer in connection with the case. A prohibition notice was served to prohibit the continued sale of the toy. Moreover, Customs officers also conducted spot checks and inspections in various districts and have found no such toy for sale so far.

An investigation is ongoing.

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

- Do not let children play with toys alone;
- Pay attention to age recommendations shown on labels;
- Follow all instructions associated with the toys;
- Take heed of whether the small parts of toys are easily detachable. Detached small parts may block children's throats and lead to suffocation if swallowed;
- Check the structure of the toys to see, for example, whether they have a fragile structure, hidden sharp points, rough surfaces, sharp edges or gaps that may pinch children's fingers;
- Throw away plastic packages of toys and children's products to avoid children being suffocated; and
- Stop children from playing with the toys immediately if any damage is observed.

Customs is committed to the protection of consumer interests 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 Toys and Children's Products Safety Ordinance, it is an

offence to supply, manufacture or import 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 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).

