

Hong Kong Customs inspection finds Halloween toys with excessive plasticiser (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs today (October 29) announced the results of safety tests on Halloween toys, with excessive amounts of phthalates (a type of plasticiser) under the Toys and Children's Products Safety Ordinance (TCPSO) and its subsidiary legislation found in one model of toy pirate hat and one model of toy axe. In another case, a model of skeleton jumpsuit was found without identification markings and applicable bilingual warnings or cautions, contrary to the requirements stipulated in the TCPSO.

With Halloween just around the corner, Customs officers earlier conducted a special spot check operation in various districts and test-bought 12 models of Halloween toys for safety tests. Results from the Government Laboratory revealed that the phthalates contained in one model of toy pirate hat and one model of toy axe amounted to 0.73 per cent and 0.17 per cent respectively of the total weight of the plasticised materials. Both models exceeded the limit of 0.1 per cent stipulated in the TCPSO and its subsidiary legislation.

Customs officers conducted an operation on October 25 and seized two suspected unsafe toy pirate hats from a retailing shop.

Regarding the model of skeleton jumpsuit that did not bear any identification markings or applicable bilingual warnings or cautions, Customs officers yesterday (October 28) also ordered a retailer to store six non-compliant skeleton jumpsuits in a specified place.

Investigation is ongoing.

Customs reminds members of the public that chronic exposure to plasticiser may harm children's health, and cause liver, kidney, reproductive and development system toxicity. Parents should be alert and prevent their children from prolonged exposure to toys and children's products with excessive plasticiser.

Under the TCPSO, it is an offence to import, manufacture or supply toys for local consumption unless the toys comply with prescribed safety standards. 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).

