

Hong Kong Customs alerts public on unsafe toy electric guitar (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs today (February 1) alerted members of the public to an unsafe model of toy electric guitar with a potential battery overheating hazard. Parents should immediately stop letting their children play with the toy and traders should also remove the toy from their shelves.

Customs officers earlier test-purchased a model of toy electric guitar for safety testing from a chain toys and stationery store in Yau Tong. Test results revealed that the toy posed a potential hazard of causing burns to users as a result of batteries overheating. It therefore failed to comply with the safety standards specified in the Toys and Children's Products Safety Ordinance (TCPSO).

Customs later conducted an operation and seized a total of 142 suspected unsafe toy electric guitars of the same model from the chain store's branch in Yau Tong and a wholesaler in Kwai Chung. Prohibition notices were also served on the chain store and the wholesaler to prohibit the continued sale of the toy.

Beyond the chain store in connection with the case, Customs officers also conducted spot checks and inspections in various districts and further seized three suspected unsafe toy electric guitars of that model from two retail shops in Ma On Shan and Kowloon City.

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 the instructions associated with the toys;
- Beware of whether the batteries are overheated so as to avoid causing burns to children;
- 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 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 TCPSO, 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).

