

Toys and play equipment safety

Useful information from the National Consumer Agency



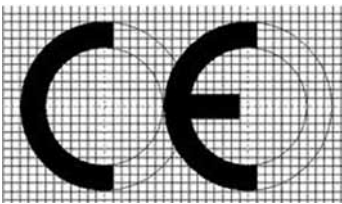
national consumer agency
gníomhaireacht náisiúnta tomhaltóirí

Helpline lo-call 1890 432 432



A toy is defined by EU toy safety regulations as any product intended, whether or not exclusively, to be used in play by children under the age of 14. Examples of toys include dolls, teddy bears, tricycles, toy cars or tractors, building blocks, toy guns, and imitation adult equipment like toy cookers.

All toys must have the CE mark like this image, which shows that the product complies with the relevant safety standards.



Tips when buying a toy

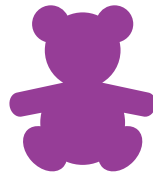
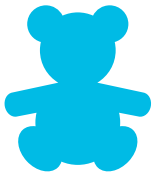
Before you buy

- Look for the CE mark on the toy, instructions or packaging. If there is none, don't buy it!
- Check to see that the toy displays the name and address of the manufacturer and/or importer.
- Read any safety instructions that come with the toy. They should be clear and precise and in a language that you understand.
- Check if the toy has any detachable small parts that could lodge in the ears, nose or throat, and cause an injury to your child. Or does the toy fire bullets or have movable parts that could detach and be dangerous?

- Toys that come with food should be packaged separately.
- Check if there is a warning about an appropriate age group for the toy and ask yourself if it is suitable for the age of your child. Are there younger children in your household who might be in danger if they play with the toy?
- If you feel there is any potential danger to the safety of your child, don't buy the toy.

After you buy

- If you get instructions with the toy, read them carefully and keep them in a safe place.
- Remove all packaging and keep out of reach of children. Plastic packaging can cause suffocation.
- If there are any strong or strange smells from the toy, it could mean that the toy may contain a lot of chemicals. You should go back to the shop where you bought the toy and explain your concerns. The shop should be able to explain why the toy smells and should fix it if there is a problem. If you are not satisfied with their response, you should contact us.
- Make sure there are no sharp edges, or nails or screws sticking out.
- If the toy uses batteries, make sure the child cannot open the part of the toy where the batteries are stored.



Take care with electrics

- Always take care when buying toys with electrical parts and read the safety instructions carefully.
- Check that the device is properly insulated and protected to prevent a risk of contact with live wires.
- Never mix old and new or different strength batteries in the toy as this can make the old or weaker batteries very hot.

Tips for Play equipment and activity toys

- Place activity toys and play equipment like swings, trampolines and climbing frames well away from hazards such as overhead power lines or obstacles like hedges, fences or trees.
- Ensure that the play equipment has been installed correctly and properly secured.
- Do not use the equipment in bad weather such as heavy rain or windy conditions.
- Ensure that playing children are supervised by an adult at all times.

Toy manufacturers must design toys that are safe:

- Toys must be made of non-toxic materials that do not burn easily.
- Toys that fold up or have hinges must be designed in a way that cannot trap fingers.
- Toys must be strong and sturdy.
- Tricycles and cars must have a safety brake.
- Any parts of a toy that can come loose should be too large for a child to swallow.
- Electrical toys must be properly insulated and protected from live wires.
- Any toys containing magnets must display a warning sign of the possible health risks posed by magnets if swallowed by children.
- Products designed for one use but that can also be used in play by children under 14 must be safe – for example, a key ring with a cuddly bear attached.
- All products for use by children, whether they are toys or not, must meet strict safety requirements.

Take action

If you come across a toy that seems unsafe or if it doesn't have a CE Mark, don't buy it. Instead, contact us with the details of the toy and where you bought it.

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