

PRESS RELEASE

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Increased inspections to ensure the safety of carnival masks, costumes and wigs

As the carnival season approaches, the National Authority for Trade and Consumer Protection (NATCP), in cooperation with government agencies is launching a comprehensive market supervision inspection to check the safety of masks, costumes, wigs, and other carnival accessories made for children. Based on the results of accredited laboratory tests, dangerous products will be withdrawn from the market where justified.

The main purpose of the inspection is to test the flammability of children's costumes, remove unsafety products from the market and detect and stop illegal distribution. Candles, lanterns, and other open flames are often used to create atmosphere during carnival and other costume events, while costumes, masks, and wigs are typically made of synthetic, man-made materials such as polyester. Without appropriate flame retardant additions, these can easily catch fire and cause serious burns. In order to protect the physical safety of children, it is essential that these products comply with EU and national safety standards.

During the previous comprehensive inspection of this range of products, the rate of non-compliance was nearly 56 percent, thus justifying the increased scrutiny. The proportion of non-compliant products was particularly high in the case of wigs and costumes containing artificial hair, which makes it necessary to repeat the inspections.

This year's inspection will focus on costumes, masks, wigs, beards, mustaches, hoods, and other headwear accessories intended for children under the age of 14. Sampling is primarily carried out from online stores, but toy wholesalers, retailers, and other stores selling these products are also subject to inspection.

The goal of the NATCP is to ensure that only safe costumes and masks that comply with regulations are sold to children. The authority may prohibit the distribution of non-compliant, particularly combustible products, recall the products, and apply other sanctions if necessary.

The authority requests that parents pay special attention to the appropriate markings and the manufacturer and importer details when purchasing costumes and avoid buying costumes of unknown origin, conspicuously cheap, or of inferior quality. It is better to choose costumes made of natural materials, such as cotton or wool felt, which are less flammable and more comfortable to wear. In addition, always ensure that children wearing costumes do not come into contact with open flames or other sources of heat.

The safety of children is a shared responsibility: child protection is one of the key points of the 7-point consumer protection action plan announced last fall. The NATCP and government agencies can contribute to this through inspections, distributors through lawful conduct, and parents through conscious choices, ensuring that the carnival holidays are truly carefree.

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National Authority for Trade and Consumer Protection