



10

TOY SAFETY

This Guidance Sheet aims to promote explore Toy Safety. It's not always possible to make children's play entirely risk-free, but it is important to reduce the number of hazards to which they are exposed. Toys must pass strict Safety assessments by law, but it is often how toys are used and the age of the child using them that are crucial factors.

Toy Safety Legislation

Introduced into British law by the Toys (Safety) Regulations 1995, the European Directive [2009/48/EC] prescribes essential safety requirements to which all toy manufacturers must adhere. This comprises general safety principles regarding the design of the toy and its construction, as well as any other potential risk factors such as physical or mechanical properties, the flammability of the toy, its chemical / electrical properties, hygiene issues, and its possible radioactivity.

The Toys (Safety) Regulations 1995 define a toy as "any product or material designed or clearly intended for use in play by children of less than 14 years of age" - but this does not include children's costume jewellery or Christmas decorations.

Safe Recruitment

In order to ensure the safety of any toy, you should always take notice of the warnings present on the packaging. The following list offers some examples of the most common symbols you will find:



Toy Warnings - This symbol means 'warning, do not give to children less than three years.'



The CE Mark - indicates that the toy conforms with essential safety requirements of the European toy safety directive.



Look for the Lion Mark - The Lion Mark can only be used by BTHA (British Toy and Hobby Association) members who have signed up to its strict code of practice.



Toy Retailers Association - Representing more than 75% of the toy trade, the Toy Retailers Association's role is to inform and advise Toy Retail members on current and future legislation.

Toy Safety Tips

Although all toys should legally adhere to the requirements proposed by the European Directive / Toys (Safety) Regulations 1995, unsafe toys are still unfortunately for sale, so it is important to shop with care. The following list offers some tips to help make sure you are only buying safe toys for play.

Always check for the mandatory European Community (CE) symbol. This is a claim by the manufacturer that the toy produced meets the requirements of the EC Toy Safety Directive. Products without the CE mark may not be intended to be used as toys, and therefore, may pose risks for children.

Look for the Lion. The Lion Mark was developed in 1988 by the BTHA (British Toy and Hobby Association) to perform a function not covered by the CE Mark, namely, to act as a recognisable symbol denoting safety and quality. To display the Lion a BHTA member must have signed a license agreement with the Association which sets out the terms of use.

When shopping for toys, try to purchase from manufacturers who have a good reputation. Many will be members of trade associations whose rules stipulate that they will need to meet high standards.

Although it may be cheaper, try not to buy toys from a car boot sale. However, if you do, take extra care to ensure that the toys harbour no potential hazards.

Consider your child's age before purchasing toys - make sure the toys are suitable. Some children, especially those under three years of age, are more vulnerable to choking and less able to cope with complex toys aimed at older children.



Toy Library Guidance: Series 2

Running a toy library in Scotland

Check toys regularly to make sure that they have not become dangerously worn or have acquired any sharp edges which could cause injuries. If you find toys have become damaged, make sure to dispose of them immediately. Alternatively, if the toy is a favourite and you're reluctant to throw it away, make sure to have the toy professionally repaired.

If a toy warning is present on a toy, this means children less than three years of age should never be allowed to play with this product as it is unsuitable for them.

Encourage children to tidy up after play, or to only play with one toy at a time. Many accidents are caused by children tripping or falling over toys that have been left out after play, particularly in the home if such toys are left near the stairs or on slippery surfaces

Battery Operated Toys

Many toys are now battery-powered, which is generally a very safe source of power. However, problems can occur if batteries are not used properly or checked periodically. The following list offers some advice on using batteries safely:

- Observe the + and – marks on the battery compartments when fitting batteries in place.
- When replacing batteries, always replace them all at the same time, e.g. do not replace one battery if the toy requires two.
- Remove batteries as soon as they are depleted, and make sure to dispose of them in such a way so that they will not come into contact with fire.
- Small batteries, such as mercury disc batteries, present a choking or poison hazard for young children. Ensure that they are never left lying around or in reaching distance.

RoSPA

Smart Play Network is affiliated with RoSPA, an organisation which works toward promoting safety at work, at leisure, on the road, and in the home. Below are listed RoSPA's top 10 safety tips on toy safety:

- Buy toys only from recognised outlets.
- Make sure the toy is suitable for the child, check the age range.
- Be particularly careful with toys for children under three.
- Be wary of young children playing with other children's toys.
- Check for loose hair, small parts, sharp edges and points.
- Ensure that garden swings and slides are robust and are not a strangulation hazard.
- Check toys regularly for wear and repair or dispose of them where necessary.
- Keep the play area tidy.
- Follow the instructions and warnings provided.
- Supervise young children at play.

Useful External Links

The Scottish Government –
www.home.scotland.gov.uk/home

RoSPA (The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) - www.rospace.com

CAPT (Child Accident Prevention Trust)
<https://www.capt.org.uk/>

Smart Play Network Members Support

Member you have access to telephone and email support. For more information about the topics covered in this guidance sheet, or any other queries you may have about your group, please contact us using: 0131 554 2620 or admin@smartplaynetwork.org

It is free to be a member of Smart Play Network, for more information on how to become a member please refer to our website: www.smartplaynetwork.org.