



# Safe use

safe products

## Product Safety

**Product safety can be improved when everyone involved – in product regulation, manufacture, supply, sale, purchase, and use – works together and actively contributes to making sure that products are safe and are used safely.**

The Measurement and Product Safety Services (MAPSS) team of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs has prepared a series of Factsheets for consumers on a range of products.

The information in this Product Safety Factsheet is a general introduction to consumer product use.

### What consumers can do

#### **In the shop**

- ask if there's a standard – does the product meet the standard? If not, don't buy it
- does it fit? – try it before you buy it!
- do you think it's unsafe? – tell the shopkeeper why
- look at labels – do they say how to use and care for the product – and how not to use it?
- ask if you need any safety equipment to use the product safely.

#### **At home**

- read and follow all instructions and safety information before you put it together, install it, plug it in, or use it
- repair broken toys and furniture immediately
- provide adequate supervision of children using the product
- be aware of possible dangers of old or modified products
- use products only for their intended purpose, and in a safe environment especially when children are around
- check the condition of products regularly, and do any necessary maintenance immediately
- report any problems to the supplier, retailer, or the MAPSS team.

#### **What if ...**

- it breaks through normal use? – Take the product back and ask for a refund or replacement
- it becomes unsafe? – Take the product back and ask for a refund or replacement
- you're still unsatisfied after taking the product back? – Contact the MAPSS team
- there is a product safety recall? Stop using the product immediately, and respond according to the recall instructions.

### What manufacturers, suppliers and retailers can do

- provide clear instructions for proper use
- train staff in safe and proper use so they can provide correct information to consumers
- be aware of and follow industry and safety standards
- incorporate safety into design
- develop product recall plans and procedures
- implement a quality assurance program which includes consumer feedback
- respond quickly to safety concerns.

### What the government can do if there's a safety problem

- establish mandatory safety standards and ensure compliance with them
- promote consumer awareness
- encourage research to improve safety
- facilitate solutions between consumers and suppliers, including:
  - talking to the shopkeeper or supplier
  - talking to the manufacturer
  - suggesting modifications to make the product safe
- negotiate the removal of unsafe products from sale
- assist companies to recall unsafe products
- help develop voluntary standards.

If the problem is extremely serious, the Minister of Consumer Affairs can:

- recall unsafe products
- ban unsafe products
- make mandatory standards.

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