



NATIONAL AUTHORITY FOR TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

PRESS RELEASE

Flammable carnival masks and costumes - The National Authority for Trade and Consumer Protection warns against carnival

In order to protect Hungarian families, the National Authority for Trade and Consumer Protection (NATCP) will continue to pay special attention to the control of seasonal products during the carnival period and will take strong action if it detects shortcomings. In the case of unsafe products, the government offices under the professional control of the NATCP will take action to withdraw the product from the market and recall it from consumers.

The NATCP and the government offices under its professional control place particular emphasis on the detection of fraudulent and often dangerous products. The primary aim of the NATCP's accredited laboratory tests is to eliminate products from the market that have unsafe burning properties. The authority is also responsible for detecting illegal marketing and enforcing compliance in the event of infringement. The importance of these controls is demonstrated by the fact that in the previous year, 20 out of 37 costumes, masks and wigs tested did not meet the requirements of the standard, i.e. 54% of the products were found to be non-compliant by the laboratory staff.

Of course, in addition to action by public authorities, consumer awareness is also a key priority to prevent. Parents are therefore advised to choose their children's costumes carefully, as they are typically made of synthetic materials, such as polyester, and may be dangerous in certain cases. Information about the manufacture and material of the products should be provided by the manufacturer and labelled on the product. If the costume is made of material with a flame spread rate of between 10 mm/s and 30 mm/s in the event of ignition, the toy and its packaging must bear the following warning: "Warning! Keep away from fire!"

Unfortunately, it is still possible that the child may use the costume in a place where there is a burning candle or other heat source, so always make sure that the child wearing the costume is not near a heat source. A polyester-based costume or wig is dangerous because the hairpiece or costume may catch fire near an open flame and the burn will not extinguish itself once the flame is extinguished. There is a serious risk of burns during foreseeable use of such costumes. Costumes made of natural materials (e.g. cotton, wool felt).

However, it is very important that flexible masks do not stick to the face and do not make breathing difficult. The ventilation surfaces must be properly designed so that the product does not present a choking hazard. On masks and helmets made of non-transparent materials that completely enclose the head at least two openings at least 150 mm apart or a single opening of at least 1300 mm², suitably designed, shall be provided to avoid the risk of suffocation.

Masks, wigs, accessories are usually available in one size. Costumes that are designed specifically for children are labelled and the height and age of the child is also indicated in the product description.

István Pintér, President of the NATCP, stressed that *"NATCP and the government offices under its professional control are doing their utmost to ensure the safety of customers. Among other things, we are constantly investigating children's toys, and in the absence of safety we will take strong action against offending companies. Where a product poses a serious risk, we will ensure that the product is withdrawn from the market or recalled from customers."*

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National Authority for Trade and Consumer Protection