



INDEPENDENT CONSUMER AND COMPETITION COMMISSION

1st Floor Garden City, Angau
Drive,
P.O. Box 6394, **BOROKO**,
National Capital District
Papua New Guinea
Telephone: (675) 325 2144
Facsimile: (675) 323 0052
Toll Free No. 180 3333
Email: infr@iccc.gov.pg

Media Release

MRC 003

ICCC prohibits the sale of small high powered magnets

THE Independent Consumer and Competition Commission has declared small high powered magnets unsafe as they can cause serious bodily harm and even death.

The magnets are marketed by suppliers in multiples of two or more for use as:

- a toy, game or puzzle such as an adult desk toy, an educational game or toy or puzzle for mental stimulation;
- a construction or modeling kit; or
- jewelry to be worn in or around the mouth, nose or face to look like studs.

The photograph below shows them in the form of small metallic round balls which children and teenagers can separate. Children, especially, are at risk of swallowing them.

If swallowed, the magnets can perforate internal organs and would require surgery to remove it.

The product names of these magnets include NeoCubes and BuckyBalls.

ICCC Commissioner and Chief Executive Officer Dr Billy Manoka said: "The Commission is of the view that these magnets can create serious illness or injury and even death. Consumers are advised, that if you have in your possession these particular type of magnet, keep them away from children and ensure they are not misused by teenagers."

The Commission published a gazettal notice of the declaration on Thursday 6 December 2012, and supply of such magnets after that date is illegal.

This means that any person caught supplying the specified magnets would be liable for prosecution with a penalty of a fine of up to K100,000 or imprisonment of up to two years.

- there are some exceptions to the ruling such as magnets that have been supplied as parts for the repair or manufacture of other goods; or
- for scientific research; or
- for industrial, medical or therapeutic goods; or

- as part of construction or modeling kit which is not used or likely to be used for personal, domestic or household use.

Dr Manoka said that anybody who is supplying or wishes to supply such magnets as described in the gazettal has to notify the Commission within 10 days of the notice if it wishes to hold a conference with the Commission in relation to this.

Contact Dr Billy Manoka on 325 2144 or email bmanoka@iccc.gov.pg.

Background

The Independent Consumer and Competition Commission (ICCC) is responsible for administering the ICCC Act as well as a number of other pieces of legislation. The law is designed to enhance the welfare of the people of PNG by encouraging competition, fair trading and efficiency in business as well as preventing anti-competitive behaviour.

The ICCC has specific wide ranging powers in relation to consumer product safety. It takes its responsibility under these provisions seriously and will take immediate action when it becomes aware of a product that can affect the health or safety of consumers.

Its powers include:

- warning consumers of the possible danger of particular goods and conducting an assessment of the risks involved;
- recommending to the Minister to declare a standard that suppliers of the product must meet or for the provision of information in relation to such a product;
- issuing interim bans where the Commission is of the view that such goods are unsafe; and there is imminent danger;
- issuing of permanent ;bans on unsafe goods; and
- requiring compulsory recall of products that are unsafe, or not compliant with a product or information standard.

The Act provides that the Commission will on request hold a conference with any supplier who may be adversely affected by its actions.