



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Department of Toxic Substances Control

News Release

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Maziar Movassaghi, Acting Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STATE FINDS HIGH AMOUNTS OF LEAD IN CHILDREN'S AND RELIGIOUS JEWELRY

LOS ANGELES, Calif. – Today the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) held a press conference to announce the discovery of jewelry containing high levels of lead that exceed California's regulatory limits. Some of the jewelry had labels claiming to be lead free and a large portion of it was imported from China.

"Lead is a toxic metal which does not belong in jewelry, particularly not in children's jewelry. Exposure to lead can cause serious health effects ranging from behavioral effects to death. Lead-containing jewelry poses a particular concern because children are prone to placing jewelry in their mouths, which can result in lead absorption at dangerous levels," noted DTSC Acting Director Maziar Movassaghi. "As the parent of a young child, I know how difficult it is to prevent young children from constantly putting things in their mouths. The fact that items are mislabeled as lead free is extremely disturbing."

DTSC officials displayed samples of the lead-tainted jewelry and demonstrated how they determined the jewelry exceeded the amount of lead allowed under state law.

Click here to see pictures of jewelry items:

http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/HazardousWaste/Jewelry/jewelry_with_lead.cfm

DTSC discovered the jewelry in six locations (mainly distributor/importer warehouses) in southern California. An analysis by the DTSC Environmental Chemistry Lab found that children's wooden angel pendant necklaces contained 736,000 parts per million (ppm) lead (nearly 74% lead). Another example is an adult turquoise stone pendant necklace that contained 710,000 ppm of lead. The jewelry containing high lead concentrations included items with religious images, such as medallions and crosses, which some people tend to kiss while praying.

On September 22, 2006, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed California's Lead-Containing Jewelry Law (Assembly Bill 1681). It went into effect on September 1, 2007. The law limits the amount of lead in children's jewelry to either 200 ppm (0.02%) or 660 ppm (0.06%) depending on the component used. The law has since been extended to limit lead in adult and body-piercing jewelry, as well as to include watches and detachable clothing and shoe ornaments.

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Movassaghi added, "Under Governor Schwarzenegger's leadership and commitment to public health, DTSC has been closely monitoring the amount of lead in jewelry sold in the state."

Current law allows for authorized representatives to inspect factories, warehouses, or any establishment where jewelry is manufactured, packed, held or sold in order to enforce Lead-Containing Jewelry regulations.

DTSC is urging consumers to return any of these items to the place of purchase. Consumer lead-testing kits are also available and are sold in most hardware stores.

DTSC discovered more than 30 lead-tainted jewelry items at the locations below. DTSC discovered them as a direct result of its ongoing efforts, which begin in 2007, to regulate jewelry. DTSC investigators are working with distributors to have them voluntarily remove the products from the shelves. The distributors have agreed in order to prevent further distribution.

Choy's Import
2627 South Soto Street
Vernon, CA 90023

New Choy
2857 Leonis Blvd
Vernon, CA 90058

Sanrio Surprises
2237 Glendale Galleria
Glendale, CA 91210

Longs Drugs
19783 Rinaldi Street
Northridge, CA 91326

Amen Trading, Inc
1743 East 42nd Street
Los Angeles, CA 90058

Amuse Accessories
8443 Van Nuys Blvd, #44
Panorama City, CA 91402

Please click here for Frequently Asked Questions:

http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/HazardousWaste/Jewelry/upload/LeadInJewelry_FAQ1.pdf

Please click here for Fact Sheet on California's Lead-Containing Jewelry Law:

http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/upload/HWMP_FS_Lead_In_Jewelry1.pdf

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FOR GENERAL INQUIRIES: Contact the Department of Toxic Substances Control by phone at (800) 728-6942 or visit www.dtsc.ca.gov. To report illegal handling, discharge, or disposal of hazardous waste, call the Waste Alert Hotline at (800) 698-6942.

The mission of the Department of Toxic Substances Control is to protect public health, safety, and the environment from toxic harm.