

## **Information Video on Unsafe Cords and Drawstrings in Children's Clothing**

**A recently finished joint action undertaken by PROSAFE and 11 Member States showed that children's clothes with non-compliant cords and drawstrings are still too common on the European market. Therefore a video has been produced to inform manufacturers, importers, designers, retailers and parents about unsafe cords and drawstrings on children's clothes.**

Long cords and drawstrings on children's clothing present a serious risk to children. Therefore, PROSAFE and 11 Member States carried out a joint action on children's clothing with cords and drawstrings which began in August 2008. The participants in the joint action took measures against more than 2,100 non-compliant garments. Two-thirds were for small children (0 – 7 years). The most common non-compliance was related to cords and drawstrings in the hood and neck area (some 60% of all cases). Cords and drawstrings in the chest and waist area accounted for another 20%.

Every year, accidents happen to children around the world due to the presence of cords and drawstrings in clothes. In some cases, the accidents can be fatal. Long strings in hoods or collars may strangle a child if they get stuck or tangled up in playground equipment, and long strings on the back of a garment may get caught in a bus door, as the child alights, causing severe injuries when the bus starts.

The participants have produced an information video on unsafe cords and drawstrings in children's clothing to inform manufacturers, importers, designers, retailers and parents about the risks and the most common and dangerous non-compliances. The video can be viewed at PROSAFE website [www.prosafe.org](http://www.prosafe.org).

### **Background**

According to the General Product Safety Directive any product that is placed on the European market must be safe; an obligation to which producers, importers and retailers must commit. Cords and drawstrings on children's clothes are presumed to be safe if they meet the requirements of the European standard EN 14682 "Safety of children's clothing – Cords and drawstrings on children's clothing – Specifications".

The joint action is coordinated by PROSAFE, "The Product Safety Enforcement Forum of Europe". It is a non-profit organisation bringing together market surveillance officers from all over Europe and across the world.

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## Advice to consumers

Consumers may come across non-compliant clothes in shops or may currently have them in their possession. Parents or other relatives may also have made clothes for children. The participating market surveillance authorities therefore have issued the following 7 recommendations:

### **The seven most important recommendations on children's clothes:**

- 1) No cords or drawstrings in the hood or around the neck of clothes for children up to 7 years (height 1.34 m).
- 2) No cords longer than 75 mm in the hood or around the neck on clothes for children between 7 and 14 years. Drawstrings should not have free ends. Cords should not be elastic (except for shoulder straps and halter necks).
- 3) No cords or drawstrings with long free ends in the chest and waist area. (Free ends must be shorter than 280 mm, when the garment is tied to the intended size.)
- 4) No free ends in the hood and neck area on halter neck-style children's clothes.
- 5) No cords or drawstrings in the back or intended to be tied on the back.
- 6) No tied belts or sashes with free ends longer than 360mm, when measured untied from the point where they are to be tied.
- 7) No cords or drawstrings trailing below the sleeve or hem of garments. Drawstrings, functional cords and decorative cords at the bottom hem of long-legged trousers shall be totally on the inside of the garment.

Homemade children's clothes or hand made clothes from craft markets should also meet the above recommendations.

If you already possess children's clothes that fail to meet the above recommendations you should remove or cut off the cord or drawstring. If you have recently bought the garment, return it to the shop where it was bought, warn the seller of the risks posed by the garment and request an exchange. You may also contact your local market surveillance office. Retailers should return non-compliant product to their distributor.

**Cords are strings that are fixed to the garment.**

**Drawstrings are strings that pass through a channel or loops on the garment.**

**A belt must be more than 30 mm wide.**

## Disclaimer

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