

Thursday, 23 August 2012

### INTERIM BAN ON SMALL POWERFUL MAGNETS

The Acting Minister for Business Services and Consumers, Patrick Conlon has today announced an interim ban on small high-powered magnets that can cause serious injury or death if swallowed.

The products, marketed under various names including BuckyBalls, Neocubes and Neodymium sphere magnets, contain numerous small, high-powered magnets.

The ban is effective immediately, and applies to any supply of the magnets for the next 60 days.

The penalties for supplying banned goods are \$1.1 million for a company, \$220,000 for an individual, or a \$1200 expiation fee.

“Consumer and Business Services issued a safety warning about these magnets just last month” said Mr Conlon.

“A permanent national ban will soon be in place. We have reports of children who swallowed these magnets suffering serious injury and, on one tragic occasion, death.

CBS Product Safety officers will be ensuring the products – which are marketed as novelty items for adults to create patterns and build shapes - are removed from sale immediately.

“If a child swallows more than one of these high-powered magnets they can attract to each other across the intestinal wall and perforate the intestine,” Mr Conlon said.

“Consumers should be aware that while these novelty magnets carry warnings, they are not toys and must be kept securely out of reach of young children.

“Teenagers also have been injured accidentally swallowing or inhaling the magnets after using them to imitate a tongue, nose or lip piercing.

“If you suspect anyone has swallowed or inhaled these small powerful magnets, seek urgent medical attention,” he said.

Suppliers of the products are invited to contact the ACCC within the next 15 days to request a conference on the proposed permanent ban.

For more information consumers and suppliers can visit [www.productsafety.gov.au](http://www.productsafety.gov.au)