

Media Release

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Product safety ban on portable ethanol burners

Portable decorative ethanol burners are now banned from sale in South Australia with recent serious injuries reported throughout Australia increasing concerns about their safety.

The State Government today approved an immediate 60-day interim ban on the sale of these products pending further assessment by SA's Consumer and Business services (CBS), the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and other consumer agencies nationally.

The action follows a high number of injuries and fire incidents being reported.

Acting Commissioner for Consumer Affairs, George Kamencak, said 113 injuries, many serious, and 117 incidents have been reported across the country since 2010. Of these, six incidents occurred in South Australia, each incident with one person injured.

"These worrying statistics may just be the tip of the iceberg as we believe there could be many more incidents and injuries involving decorative ethanol burners that have not been reported to consumer agencies and fire emergency services," Mr Kamencak said.

"While educational material has been available warning of the dangers of these products and providing owners with advice regarding their use, we believe the number of injuries caused justifies a product safety ban.

"The biggest danger arising from these products came when consumers re-fuelled the burner when it was still lit or warm. When the fuel is low, the flame can appear blue or clear, making it difficult to see. There was also a risk of the burner being knocked over, especially by children or pets, potentially causing serious burns to people nearby as well as damage to property.'

The interim ban now means that retailers and online traders based in South Australia must take the banned products off their shelves or delete them from online catalogues and cease sales immediately.

Individuals face a maximum fine of \$220,000 and corporations facing a maximum fine of \$1.1 million if found to be selling banned products.

Mr Kamencak is warning consumers who have ethanol-fuelled burners in their home to stop using it immediately. After further investigations are complete, consumers will be advised if they can return the product for a full refund and the store may require proof of purchase such as a receipt, credit card or bank statement.

"This interim ban only affects the portable or table-top versions of the product. Ethanol fireplaces that are installed in a fixed position are not included in the ban, however, further investigations into injuries are being carried out. In the meantime, caution is still strongly recommended in the use of these fireplaces," he said.

"The interim ban also does not affect products with a power output of more than 4.5 kW and those used in the heating or warming of food."

For more information on the ban please visit the [CBS website](#) or call 131 882.