

Press Release

[DEKRA offers safety tips about toy quality](#)

Exercise Caution when Buying Toys

- ▶ Toy quality has developed positively
- ▶ Particular care should be taken when buying online
- ▶ Check for quality marks and test labels

Anyone looking to buy toys as a children's present should pay close attention when shopping for them. In DEKRA experts' experience, the safety of toys has significantly improved in Germany in recent years, especially when it comes to harmful substances. Nonetheless, there are outliers in terms of quality.

"It is encouraging to see that the quality of toys has developed positively," says Dr. Magdalena Krause, a harmful substances expert at DEKRA. "At the same time, the limits for harmful substances have been tightened in Europe and new chemicals have been added to the EU Toy Safety Directive. Gone are the days when one in three toys was classified as non-compliant."

Risks still exist

However, it would be premature to give the all-clear. In laboratory product testing, DEKRA experts have found that retailers are still selling toys that are contaminated with substances such as phthalates, flame retardants, and heavy metals. Others do not comply with mechanical and physical requirements or are not properly marked or labeled.

The EU counteracts such risks with the Rapid Exchange of Information System (RAPEX), which quickly forwards information on potential hazards and corrective actions to the member states and the European Commission. Every year across Europe, around 2,000 reports are processed covering various product groups. Consumers are also able to access information on the Safety Gate website. <https://ec.europa.eu/safety-gate-alerts/screen/webReport>

Pay attention when buying online

Dr. Magdalena Krause, the DEKRA expert, recommends trusting the quality available from specialist retailers. Shoppers who buy from a brick-and-mortar location can pick the product up themselves and form their own impression about the toy's quality. The online stores run by well-known manufacturers are usually a reliable source as well. However, in the DEKRA expert's experience, it is advisable to pay close attention when

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buying from the open online market.

Since there is a lack of complete oversight in online retail, there is a higher risk of ending up with counterfeit products made of lower-quality materials containing harmful substances. The expert's advice to European consumers: "Make sure that the toys are fully marked and labeled. Ensure, too, that you have full details for a point of contact within the EU. And if in doubt, ask whether it is possible to return your item." Other indications of a safe product include instructions and warnings in easy-to-understand language as well as information on which age group the product is suitable for. Strikingly low prices or unusually long delivery times often indicate a supplier from East Asia.

Check for testing labels

Whether shopping in store or online, testing labels offer greater assurance when buying toys. Specifically, all toys sold in the EU must carry the Conformité Européenne (CE) mark. By adding this logo to their product, the manufacturer affirms that it meets the legal requirements.

Germany's GS (*Geprüfte Sicherheit*/"Tested Safety") symbol can also provide guidance. This mark is issued following testing by an approved neutral body, such as DEKRA. It is voluntary like the Oeko-Tex 100 or Blue Angel, other European product certification labels that focus on specific aspects such as harmlessness to human health and eco-friendliness.

More generally, common sense is also required. DEKRA product tester Krause's recommendation: "If a toy sticks, smears, smells strange, or stains when it shouldn't, you are definitely best off keeping your hands away from it."

www.dekra.com/en/chemical-testing/

About DEKRA

DEKRA was originally founded in 1925 to ensure road safety through vehicle inspection. With a much wider scope today, DEKRA is the world's largest independent non-listed expert organization in the testing, inspection, and certification sector. As a global provider of comprehensive services and solutions, we help our customers improve their safety, security, and sustainability outcomes. In 2022, DEKRA generated sales totaling nearly EUR 3.8 billion. The company currently employs almost 49,000 people who offer qualified and independent expert services in approximately 60 countries on five continents. With a platinum rating from EcoVadis, DEKRA is now in the top one percent of sustainable businesses ranked.