



For Immediate Release
September 27, 2007

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MADIGAN REACHES SETTLEMENT WITH DISTRIBUTOR OF CHILDREN'S LUNCH BAGS CONTAINING LEAD

Consumers May Return Lunch Bags for Refunds

Chicago – Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced an agreement with an Illinois-based lunch bag distributor, in which the company will cease the sale and distribution of lunch bags containing amounts of lead in excess of the limits in Illinois law . Under this agreement, InGear Corporation also will accept returns of the lunch bags, provide refunds to consumers, properly dispose of the lead bags and establish effective procedures to ensure future compliance with the Illinois Lead Poisoning Prevention Act.

“It is crucial that children's products containing any amount of lead be taken off the shelves and out of the hands of young children,” Madigan said.

Exposure to lead can cause cognitive impairments that manifest themselves in the form of IQ loss and behavioral problems such as hyperactivity and aggression. Children are especially susceptible to risks from lead exposure because the toxin absorbs quickly into their systems. Lead gradually accumulates in the bones where it can be re-released into the blood and continue to affect an individual well after the initial exposure. Because of these significant health risks for children, the Illinois Lead Poisoning Prevention Act bans the sale of any children's product containing lead in amounts higher than 600 parts per million.

Between January 2005 and November 2005, InGear's lunch bags were sold by Dominick's stores throughout Illinois . Madigan's office and the Chicago Department of Public Health conducted an investigation which revealed that at least one of InGear's lunch bags – Frozn' Lady Bugs with Tangle Toy, Style Number 26700SW – contained lead at 250 parts per million. Although that level is below the legal limit of 600 parts per million, because of the health risks associated with exposing children to lead, Madigan's office worked with InGear to reformulate the interior portions of the lunch bags to use a non-lead material.

As a result of the settlement agreement, InGear will no longer sell lead lunch bags in Illinois that violate the Lead Poisoning Prevention Act and the company has voluntarily agreed to accept returns of the bags from consumers and retail stores.

To obtain a refund, customers should return the lunch bags, accompanied by a Refund Request Form, directly to InGear at the company's expense by Nov. 30, 2007.

The Refund Request Form and instructions for returning the lunch bags are available through the Attorney General's Office by visiting the Web site at www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov.

Customers may also return the bags to the retail stores of original purchase for a refund or store credit. Customers can call InGear at 1-888-InGEAR-4 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. CST with any questions about returning lunch bags.

For more information on the effects of lead exposure, please visit the Web sites of the Illinois Department of Public Health, www.idph.state.il.us, and the Chicago Department of Public Health, www.cityofchicago.org.

Assistant Attorney General Monica Grubbs of the Consumer Fraud Bureau and Assistant Attorney General Vanessa Vail of the Environmental Enforcement Bureau handled this case with the assistance of the Chicago Department of Public Health.

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