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MADIGAN RELEASES ANNUAL HOLIDAY SAFE SHOPPING GUIDE

Attorney General's Guide Details Dangerous Products of 2015, Offers Helpful Tips for Parents to Create Safe, Positive Online Experiences

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today released her annual Safe Shopping Guide highlighting hazardous toys, children's products and household items that have been recalled over the past year to help Illinois families ensure their home is safe for the holidays. In addition, the guide details practices that should be used with many popular holiday gifts with Internet access, including smartphones, gaming consoles and tablets.

The [2015 Safe Shopping Guide](#) includes detailed descriptions and photographs of nearly 100 children's products recalled in the last year – from popular children's toys and games that pose choking hazards to children's furniture and playsets that pose entrapment or falling risks.

This year's edition also addresses another risk parents confront every day: keeping their children safe online. The digital age has created a new landscape that presents new dangers to children in particular, who can be vulnerable when using the Internet, online games or apps. Madigan's office offers specific tips parents can follow to ensure their children use these ubiquitous Internet-accessible devices safely.

"Today's kids are interested and skilled in the latest technology," said Madigan. "While there are many benefits to our kids using technology, there are pitfalls and dangers every parent should be aware of. Luckily, implementing a few rules and practices can promote safe and positive online experiences for our children."

Recent data illustrate the need for parents to be more aware of how their children are using technology and engaging others online. For example, while 91 percent of parents believe they are well informed about what their teens do online and on their cell phones, only 21 percent of teens think their parents are very well informed about their online behavior. In addition, approximately 93 percent of parents say they have set rules or limits regarding Internet use, but these rules do not include parents checking their children's online behavior.

To help parents navigate these issues, this year's guide offers tips for parents to create safe and positive online experiences for children of all ages:

1. Maintain open communication with your child about technology and the appropriate uses of it.
2. Make sure your child knows they cannot be anonymous on the Internet.
3. Talk to your child about what should never be posted online and the dangers of posting too much information.
4. Explain that posting online is just like writing in permanent marker – it cannot be erased.
5. Engage your child in continuous conversations about how to behave online.
6. Complete a "[use agreement](#)" with your child and talk about respecting others online. Establish and enforce household rules for technology usage.
7. Discuss why strong passwords are important, how to create them and the need to keep them private. Obtain all passwords for devices and apps.
8. Stay informed on your child's Internet habits, review their user history and observe their social media activity. Know who their friends and followers are.
9. Be aware of changes in your child's behavior that may indicate cyberbullying.
10. Never threaten to take away your child's phone or Internet access. This could prevent them from approaching you in the future about online problems.

For more information or assistance, Attorney General Madigan urged Illinois residents to contact her office's [Internet Safety Team](#) at 1-888-414-7678 or email them at e-info@atg.state.il.us to connect with an Internet Safety Specialist. Madigan's Internet Safety Team regularly provides schools, teachers, students and parents with online safety tips, helping children understand the importance of using safe online practices.

"We thank Attorney General Madigan for continuing to highlight dangerous recalled products and other potential dangers to children," said Kids in Danger Executive Director Nancy Cowles. "This is an exciting and fun time of year, and the Safe Shopping Guide helps ensure it's a safe time of year as well."

"The Attorney General's Office has long been on the forefront of ensuring our children are safe from many dangers around them," said Abe Scarr, Illinois PIRG Director. "This year is no different. The Attorney General's Office has offered real, practical advice for keeping children safe online, which is critical information in today's digital age."

Consumers can view and download the 2015 Safe Shopping Guide at Madigan's [website](#) or by calling the Attorney General's Recall Hotline for a print copy at 1-888-414-7678.

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