

Sunglasses safety comes out of the shade this summer

Sellers of sunglasses and fashion spectacles that fail to comply with safety standards will be targeted during a national surveillance campaign by the ACCC late in 2013.

The campaign follows the release of a new guide summarising requirements for the supply of sunglasses and fashion spectacles and outlining responsibilities for those selling them.

In Australia, the ACCC sets the mandatory standard for sunglasses and fashion spectacle based on parts of Australian Standard

AS/NZS 1067:2003.

Australian Competition and Consumer Commission director of surveillance and breach management, Glenn Probyn, said the compliance program would focus on retailers and online suppliers of sunglasses and fashion spectacles.

'With summer approaching, from August to November 2013 the ACCC with the assistance of state and territory fair trading agencies will be conducting a joint surveillance program covering retailers and online suppliers of sunglasses and

fashion spectacles,' he said.

The program aims to determine the extent of sector compliance with the mandatory sunglasses standard, increase supplier awareness of requirements of the standard, increase overall compliance with the standard, and raise consumer awareness of categories associated with sunglasses and fashion spectacles.

'With the ACCC's commitment to minimise injury to consumers and to ensure compliance with the mandatory standard, part of our work to promote safe sunglasses and to minimise eye disease is to raise awareness of the mandatory standard and to survey suppliers of sunglasses and fashion spectacles where appropriate,' Mr Probyn said.

The ACCC is responsible for administering the mandatory consumer product safety standard for sunglasses and fashion spectacles, introduced to prevent eye conditions such as cataracts and cancer of the eye from exposure to ultraviolet radiation.

NSW Fair Trading Commissioner Rod Stowe said 236 NSW traders had been inspected by mid-August, with 107 or just over 45 per cent selling non-compliant sunglasses.

'The important thing to look for when buying sunglasses is compliance with the Australian Standard AS/NZS 1067:2003,' Mr Stowe said.

The standard mandates clearly legible markings on sunglasses, not obscured by price or other labels. Markings should be indelible on the frames or on a removable label on the lens or securely attached or tied to the frame or any combination of these.

All assembled sunglasses and individual sunglass lenses must feature the identification of the manufacturer or supplier and the lens category number and description.

The Sunglasses and fashion spectacles—Supplier guide was published on the ACCC website on 5 July. A free electronic version is available from www.accc.gov.au or via the direct link, www.productsafety.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/1001474.

Optometrists Association national professional services manager Jared Slater said that members unsure of their responsibilities could read the guide or call the association.

For its 2014-2015 UV campaign, the association will collaborate with the ACCC.



Are your
sunglasses
up to standard?

Check in for an
eye
check-up