

Trading Standards News

A summary of work and Facebook posts by the Trading Standards Service



Don't get burnt

With bonfire night almost upon us, we wanted to remind local residents of the importance of buying fireworks from reputable retailers and to advise businesses of their responsibilities. The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) has launched a campaign whereby they encourage groups, businesses and individuals to support the consumer awareness message on how to stay safe when using fireworks. Some of the top tips are listed below:

- Buy fireworks from licensed instore and online retailers
- Ensure fireworks are stored safely
- Let off fireworks on traditional celebration dates and adhere to the fireworks curfew
- Be considerate when letting off fireworks and let your neighbours know in advance
- Keep animals safe
- Follow the instructions on safe usage

Fireworks cannot be sold from temporary storage locations such as car boot sales, in the street, at the roadside, market stalls, from a private home or on social media. If you spot someone selling fireworks illegally, please report it on 0808 223 1133

For advice for businesses please visit <https://www.hse.gov.uk/explosives/fireworks/> and for further and advice including leaflets and campaign materials, please visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/opss-launches-firework-safety-campaign>



East Midlands Airport

Trading standards officers have been busy at East Midlands Airport checking the consignments arriving in the UK. Typically in the run up to Christmas, there is a rise in consignments being imported into East Midlands Airport.

A recently tested set of bridal jewellery contained over 500 times the amount of permitted lead. Lead is a toxic metal that doesn't break down in the environment and accumulates in our body which can ultimately cause organ failure. Wearing this jewellery on your special day could result in long term problems.

These products have been removed from sale.



Illicit tobacco

The sale of cheap illicit tobacco products brings criminals into our neighbourhoods, as well as being a temptation for those trying to stop smoking and creates an unfair trading environment for our law-abiding businesses.

The sale of illicit tobacco products has been identified as being linked to serious and organised crime groups funding people trafficking and drug smuggling. Keep it out of our communities by reporting on 0808 223 1133 or reporting it anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555111



Animal health and welfare

Are you a farmer or know someone who is?

Administered by the Rural Payments Agency (RPA), the countryside productivity scheme provides funding for projects in England which improve productivity in the farming and forestry sectors and help create jobs and growth in rural economy. More information can be found by visiting

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/countryside-productivity-scheme>

Applications can be made at <https://cpsmall.org.uk> but the closing date is the 4th November 2020

- Watch the second video from the UK's Chief Vet Christine Middlemiss to learn about 5 easy steps you can take to help protect your birds from bird flu this winter. These steps apply to both commercial and pet poultry keepers and gamebird keepers too. You can read more about bird flu at <https://bit.ly/31o8Cak>
The link to the video is: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=379793716396617>
- Do you keep poultry? If you have more than 50 birds you must be registered on the Poultry Register. If you have fewer than 50 you can still register and help prevent the spread of disease and protect the national poultry flock. For more guidance and an application form visit <https://www.gov.uk/.../poultry-including-game-birds>
- Buying a puppy/dog from abroad? Make sure you understand all the rules, your dog may be put into quarantine if you don't. For more guidance visit <https://www.gov.uk/bring-pet-to-uk>



Scams and Doorstep Crime

Trading Standards continues to receive reports of scams and doorstep crime, below are just a few examples of those recently received and the following posted on Facebook:

- **Green Homes** - Following the Government launch of the Green Homes Grant, Trading Standards reminds residents to exercise caution if they are looking to use the grant for improvements to their homes. The Green Homes Grant is an initiative to get homeowners to invest money in improving the energy-efficiency of their property whilst also giving the economy a much-needed boost. Homeowners and landlords can apply for a voucher to cover some of the costs for installing energy efficient improvements to their homes. However, we are concerned the door may be left open for fraudulent traders to exploit the trust of consumers who wish to access the grant scheme. You can then independently verify the traders' identity and accreditation to the grant scheme by searching on www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk or calling 0800 444202.
- **Beware of fake Instagram accounts** - offering free prizes and giveaways. We have recently received a report of a fake account pretending to be a large make up company. They contacted the individual directly through the social media app, saying they had won a giveaway and to claim through a fake website by entering their personal details.
How to spot fake accounts:
Look over the account promoting the giveaway carefully — does it have a large number of followers?
Does it post regularly?
Do the number of likes correspond with the number of followers?
Is the profile complete?
Always check for legitimate terms and conditions for the giveaway and never pay to claim a prize or for postage.

- **CAB** - We have received reports of scammers purporting to be from the Citizen's Advice Bureau offering debt advice. They are targeting vulnerable people and possibly those with debts. Even if they know your name and contact number, and it sounds like they are calling from a busy call centre – don't fall for it! The service would never cold call people offering advice – so hang up and don't get caught out!
- **Inland Revenue** - We have received reports of resident receiving calls from Inland Revenue saying there is a problem with their National Insurance number. This is an automated call asking the victim to call a number to 'resolve the issue'. It's a scam! Don't call the number, don't provide any personal details, do report full details of the scam by email to: phishing@hmrc.gov.uk including the following details:
 - date of the call
 - phone number used
 - content of the call
- **Fish sellers** - Reports are being received of door to door businesses offering fresh and frozen fish in the Loughborough area and acting in an aggressive manner in their sales techniques. The products are often not as described and, in some cases, contain only the filleted skin instead of fish. The seller may initially show you a lovely box of fish, but this is swapped when they get a pack out of the van for you. The advice is only to purchase from reputable suppliers.
- **Netflix** - Be aware of emails going around purporting to be from Netflix and claiming that the recipient had cancelled their membership when they were not actually subscribed. This aroused suspicion and luckily no details were revealed. The fraudsters want your personal and financial details by making various false claims and once they have these details they can obtain credit in your name, potentially access your cash and also sell the details to other criminals to use. Forward suspicious emails to report@phishing.gov.uk for further investigation.
- **Rogue traders** - Reports have been received that rogue traders are currently working in the Packington area. It is likely that they will try to obtain work in surrounding areas of the county, so we are warning residents to be aware. These traders have been offering to carry out work on properties including jet washing, sealing driveways and property improvements. A verbal price is agreed and payment demanded in cash. This work is often of little value, if required at all. Please ensure that if you are wanting some work carried out on your property, that you obtain at least 3 quotes, do not agree to any work on your doorstep, obtain full details of the company, the work and price in writing and never pay in cash.
- **A chat about scams today can help keep the criminals away!** - Unfortunately, victims of scams often feel embarrassment or shame as it's still a taboo subject for many. If we talk about scams or share scam awareness messages, it will help and protect others, including the elderly members of our community. The fraudsters don't want us to talk about their criminal activity or share details of their scams with others, so let's get talking.

If you wish to report a matter or for further free advice and guidance on this and other areas of Trading Standards work, please visit: <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/business-and-consumers/trading-standards>

Tel: 0808 223 1133 Email: tradingstandards@leics.gov.uk  /LeicsTradingStandards