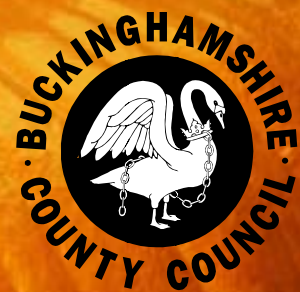


halloween - trick or treat

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edition 32



JoTs

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### Health eating

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### Animal Health

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### Contacting us

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08453 70 80 90

[consumeradvice@buckscc.gov.uk](mailto:consumeradvice@buckscc.gov.uk)

[www.buckscc.gov.uk](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk)

Please feel free to copy any of the articles featured in this edition for your local newsletters and where appropriate please pass JoTs around your community.

If you have any comment to make concerning JoTs please contact Jackie Eldridge, 01296 383357 or [jeldridge@buckscc.gov.uk](mailto:jeldridge@buckscc.gov.uk)

Trading Standards and Energywatch (the independent gas and electricity consumer council) receive thousands of complaints each year from consumers who have been misled, or intimidated, into signing contracts, or have had their signatures forged onto energy contracts.

These malpractices are causing many consumers severe distress and inconvenience and as a result consumers are being deterred from engaging in doorstep sales. Trading Standards and Energywatch want consumers to be able to get this information without being intimidated, misled or pressurised into making decisions.

There are many steps consumers can take to minimise the risk of becoming a target for unscrupulous sales representatives.

## Taking control on your doorstep:

To protect yourself from bogus callers remember that all genuine sales representatives will be able to show you their company identification.

If a person claiming to be a sales representative calls at your home:

- Request to see their company identification.
- If you are in any doubt about the caller's identity check with the company they claim to be from. Get the telephone number of the company from directory enquiries or your phone book and not from the caller.
- If you suspect the caller may be bogus, do not let them in.
- Remember you are under no obligation to allow anyone into your home.
- Do not allow sales representatives to wander around your house unaccompanied.
- Avoid signing any documents at all, unless you are certain you want to switch.



Your rights when switching supplier in your home or by phone:

- If you enter into a contract in your home or over the phone and this was a "cold call" (i.e. the salesperson's visit or call was not at your request) you are entitled to a seven day "cooling off" period after you sign the contract. This means you have a minimum of seven days in which you are able to change your mind and cancel the contract.
- If you do change your mind about your decision to change supplier, inform the new company straight away and confirm any phone call you make in writing.

### Useful contacts

Engerywatch  
08459 06 07 08

Telephone Preference Service  
08450 70 07 07

Mail Preference Service  
08457 03 45 99

Consumer Direct  
08454 04 05 06

## Trick or Treat -

Halloween is fun for most young people but sadly for some of the elderly and vulnerable it becomes the time of year they dread.

Children are being asked to spare a thought for those who may be afraid of the Halloween high jinx associated with trick or treating, especially the elderly.

Please respect the wishes of people displaying a 'No Trick or Treat' sign, by not calling at their home.

### Halloween Safety

If your children are going 'trick or treating' make sure that they know the difference between tricks and vandalism.

Make sure children know how to behave safely. They should always be accompanied by an adult and keep to well lit streets and NEVER accept invitations to go into a house.

After dark, wear something visible (sticky-back reflective strips can be easily stuck onto clothing and costumes)

Do not open the door to anybody you are unsure of. Always ask a name and if in doubt keep the door shut.

Beware of strangers, always use a security chain when opening the door.

Never invite 'trick or treaters' into your home.

If you don't want callers on Halloween, put a clear sign by your door stating 'sorry, no trick or treaters'.

## Outfits.

As Halloween approaches, parents must take care in choosing costumes and accessories for their children. Face paints that burn skin, cloaks and hair that can catch fire and brooms made of sticks that could choke small children are just some of the hazards to watch out for over this Halloween.

When choosing costume accessories, remember that many of the axes, swords and tridents are only designed to be used under strict parental supervision. All toys should carry the CE European Safety mark, and hair or fur on costumes and masks should be fire retardant.

Make up and face paints should be labelled in accordance with Cosmetic Products (Safety) Regulations 2003. Products must display a list of ingredients, contact details for the manufacturer, a best before date, description of the product and any warning or precautionary information. Always ensure that

these warnings or instructions are followed when applying face paints or make up.

Every year, children and adults are injured in accidents where lighted candles or fireworks have ignited flammable fur or hair. Bin liners used as capes can also pose fire risks.

This year, we will be out sampling and testing Halloween masks, to ensure they comply with all of the relevant safety requirements.



Showing that the product conforms to European Safety Directive

### Keep your children safe this Halloween.

Look for items that carry the CE mark when purchasing toys and associated items.

Supervise children using toy axes, swords and other costume accessories, and do not allow them to play with products marked for adult use only.

Check the labels on face paints, and follow any instructions provided.

Use only fire retardant costumes and masks, and always supervise children around candles and other naked flames.

## Fireworks

You may only buy fireworks if you are over 18.

Unless they have a special licence shops can only sell fireworks between 15 October and 10 November. Other permitted times are 26-31 December, three days before Chinese New Year and three days before Diwali.

You can only let fireworks off before 11pm except on fireworks night itself when you can go on to 12pm. Other exceptions are New Years Eve, Chinese New Year and Diwali when this is extended to 1am. In all cases fireworks cannot be let off before 7am.

It is illegal to let fireworks off in the street.

It is illegal to have fireworks in your possession in a public place if you are under 18.

Sellers must take measures to prevent fire or explosion, limit the extent of fire or explosion and protect people from the effects of fire or explosion.

People who sell or store fireworks must have a licence or registration to store fireworks.

The amount of fireworks shops are allowed to have in public areas is dependent on the floor area.

All traders must do a risk assessment of their storage arrangements.

## IT IS ILLEGAL...

1. TO SELL ADULT\* FIREWORKS TO ANYONE UNDER 18
2. FOR ANYONE UNDER 18 TO POSSESS ADULT\* FIREWORKS IN A PUBLIC PLACE

\* ANY FIREWORKS EXCEPT FOR CAPS, CRACKER SNAPS, INDOOR FIREWORKS, NOVELTY MATCHES, PASTY POPPERS, SERPENTS, SPARKLERS AND THROWDOWNS

FIREWORKS  
BE SAFE  
NOT SORRY

dti

## Ban on lighters

An EU decision banning the supply of Novelty and Non Child Resistant Cigarette lighters has come into force. Up to 20 children a year are killed by cigarette lighters in Europe. The first move is to stop the supply into Europe and to stop them being supplied into the trade and this will take effect from 17 March 2007. There is a long period of grace to allow retailers to sell through their existing stocks and the restrictions. For them this won't apply until 2008

There are basically two types of mechanisms available at the minute which make a lighter difficult for a child to operate. They are having a stiff operating lever or wheel and a dual action strike mechanism.

We are available to offer advice to any trader in the supply chain about the effect of the new rules.

Any trader who fails to comply with the ban could face a fine of up to £20,000



**NO TRICK  
OR TREAT**

**please do not  
disturb**



## Healthy eating

Food eaten in childhood may have a lasting influence on our health. There is rising concern about the nutritional value of many of the foods most popular with children. Trading standards carried out a number of surveys this year on foods that were targeted at children, such as foods sold as particularly suitable for school lunch boxes, crisps and snacks.

We also looked at the amount of trans fats in many of these lunch box foods. Trans fats are not labelled on foods, because at the moment there is no legal requirement to do so. These fats are produced when oils are turned into solid fat by the process of hydrogenation. Hydrogenated oils are widely used in food manufacturing. Experts say that trans fats are a very serious risk to health. They increase the risk of heart disease, strokes, diabetes and some forms of cancer. For this reason many countries have now limited the amount of trans fats that can be in food. Our survey found that of the 48 products tested, 15 would be illegal in Denmark, where there are very strict limits. The foods with

high levels of trans fats include Kellogs Chocolate Caramel Crispies Squares, Cadbury Double Decker, Tesco Coconut Delights and McVities Milky Way Cake Bars, all popular with children.

We are now calling on government to make labelling of trans fat compulsory, in much the same way as saturated fat and total fat content is already stated on nutrition labels, and to place an upper limit on trans fats, as in Denmark.



Our popular leaflet, 'School Lunchbox Food' has been re-issued with up to date information on trans fats and other nutritional information. Details of our surveys can be downloaded from our website.

[buckscc.gov.uk](http://buckscc.gov.uk)

## Future investigations

### Imported food and illegal colours

Following the recent food warnings concerning the use of an illegal colour in chilli powder, we will be checking imported spices this Autumn for the presence of illegal colour.

### Hidden salt

Health experts advise us all to reduce the amount of salt we consume. We can easily stop sprinkling extra salt on our meals and we can check food labels and select those with the lowest salt contents, but what do we do with foods that are not packaged and meals we eat in restaurants? Do we know how much salt is in non pre-packed foods that we eat regularly?

We will be looking at how much salt is in non pre-packed bread from our local bakers. We are also checking how much salt is in the meals when we eat out. Our survey results will allow us to issue more tips on reducing salt intake.

### Spirit Substitution

Michael John Mock from Aylesbury was running the bar at Stoke Mandeville community centre when we discovered cheap rum being sold as Bacardi rum, during a routine inspection. Mr Mock was fined £800 and ordered to pay £1,000 cost by Aylesbury Magistrates court. The practice of selling cheap brands of spirits in the bottles labelled as more expensive premium brands allows traders to make more profit at the expense of both the consumer and those licensees who abide by the law.

### Royal Greenland Ltd

The company produce fish products including fish fingers. Sampling by trading standards officers both in Buckinghamshire and Gloucestershire showed that the fish fingers were deficient in fish. The companies quality control procedure relied on the size of the fish block used to make the fish finger not the weight. If a less dense raw material was used the food would be deficient in fish which was what had happened in this case. The company entered a guilty plea at Aylesbury Magistrates Court and were fined £5,000 with £950 costs.

### Written Warnings

**Two farmers** have been issued with written warnings, one for having cattle with missing ear tags and the other for causing unnecessary suffering to animals and failure to dispose of animal carcasses. The former requirement is to ensure the traceability of farm animals to help prevent the spread of disease in case of an outbreak like foot and mouth. The latter is to do with animal welfare and the prevention of disease.

**A publican** was found with a bottle of substituted spirit on his premise. Bacardi Rum had been substituted with an unknown brand. We normally take court action for such offences but extenuating circumstances meant that this should be dealt with a warning.

**A trader in High Wycombe** was found in possession of hardware and software for copying discs. He had to forfeit the infringing product and the software used for making the copies. He was given a written warning.

**A person in Aylesbury** started selling counterfeit printer cartridges on the internet but was found out by brand protection agents working for the manufacturers. The matter was reported to us and we seized all the offending cartridges. A written warning was issued.

**An individual** who clocked a car from 144,000 to 70,000 was given a written warning for offences under the Trade Description Act 1968. In normal circumstances we would prosecute even a private person for such an offence but extenuating circumstances meant that a warning was issued instead.

### Avian Flu

If there is a suspected or confirmed outbreak of avian flu in Buckinghamshire, we are well prepared to deal with it. Plans are in place to ensure rapid, effective action will be taken to contain any problems. Our emergency plans have already been checked. Naturally, people are concerned when they find dead birds. However, Defra has advised that dead birds need not be reported unless there are 3 or more dead birds of the same species, or 5 or more dead birds from different species.

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consumer advice?**

**we're here to help**

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Let down by a tradesman?

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We offer straightforward and impartial advice on all kinds of consumer issues - from bill queries to faulty goods, to reporting dishonest traders and avoiding scams.

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[www.consumerdirect.gov.uk](http://www.consumerdirect.gov.uk)

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