

Fact Sheet

Irons



What is an Iron?

An iron is a hand held electrical appliance which is used for smoothing or pressing fabric by the application of heat or steam.¹ Steam irons are the most popular type of irons used in the home and usually have a cord attached, however, there are cordless models available in the market as well.

How may a child be injured?

Burns

- Children may sustain burns to their body either from touching a hot iron, or from one that has fallen on them, as a result of pulling on the cord. Contact burns sustained from irons can be so severe that children may require skin grafts and ongoing medical treatment.

Electrocution

- Children may be electrocuted while playing with dangling iron cords which are frayed, or by touching an active iron with wet hands. Iron cords which are placed in the mouth and bitten on may also cause electrocution in children.

Struck by object

- Children may be struck by a hot iron if they pull on dangling iron cords.
- Children who are sitting or playing near ironing boards may be struck by an ironing board that tips over.

How common are these injuries?

During a five year period from June 1999 to June 2004, The Burns Research Institute at The Children's Hospital at Westmead identified 100 patients admitted to hospital from iron contact burns. Of these, 25% required skin grafting and a further 25% took longer than 14 days to heal³. Most of these iron burns had occurred on the hands which affects the patients' long term ability to attend to everyday activities.

Is there a Law or an Australian Standard for irons?



The law, in New South Wales, states that all irons sold must meet the requirements of the Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act 2004 and its Regulations. Irons are considered as declared articles which must be tested and approved before they can be sold.

The easiest way to determine if an iron is approved is to see if it displays an acceptable approval mark, as shown below:

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Type of approval mark	Example
State approval numbers	
New South Wales	N12345 or NSW12345
Queensland	Q011234
Victoria	V023425
South Australia	S12345
ACT	A12345
Standards Australia International (SAI) type mark	SAI TE (licence no.)
SAI Global	
Regulatory Compliance Mark (RCM). Note: may be accompanied by the supplier code (eg. N789)	

Remember:

- The Children’s Hospital at Westmead and Kaleidoscope recommend that you purchase an iron that meets the requirements of the Electricity (Consumer Safety) Act 2004 and its Regulations. Only use irons which display acceptable approval marks.
- Avoid ironing when small children are present. Iron while children are asleep or place them in a playpen while you iron.
- Ironing boards are unstable structures. Children who are sitting or playing nearby may be struck by ironing boards that fall over.
- Ensure that the iron is not plugged into the power supply while pouring water into the appliance.
- Do not leave irons unattended.
- Use the stand provided for the iron. Irons that are left face-down on the ironing board may start a fire.
- After use, place hot irons out of reach of children to avoid burns injuries. Ensure that the attached cords are also out of reach of children’s hands.
- Immediately after use, fold ironing boards up and store them properly in a secure place.
- The Children’s Hospital at Westmead and Kaleidoscope recommend that you check for products that have been recalled (www.recalls.gov.au) prior to buying or borrowing an iron for use at home.

¹NSW Office of Fair Trading, 2005. “Iron”

http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/business/sellingsafeproducts/electricalproducts_gtoj.html

² NSW Office of Fair Trading, 2006. “Safe electrical goods”

<http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/corporate/publications/fte26safeelectricalgoods.html>

³The Children’s Hospital at Westmead – Burns Research Institute, 2005. “Clinical Audits – The Significance of Iron Burns” [http://www.chw.edu.au/research/groups/chbri/05\)clinical_audits.htm](http://www.chw.edu.au/research/groups/chbri/05)clinical_audits.htm)