



## 1. **Introduction**

Manchester Trading Standards Service has taken action and issued associated warnings on unsafe goods that could be considered as Christmas gifts to children. The action centres on mini motorbikes and a cheap but dangerous child's doll. A press release regarding the bikes was issued across Greater Manchester in November and the Manchester Evening News carried an article in November delivering the message that these models were unsafe, and the anti social aspect of their use. The dolls have only very recently been discovered and the problems associated with the dolls has been described on the Trading Standards website (<http://www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/manchester/>), and a press release prepared.

Manchester Trading Standards Service purchased 3 mini motorbikes (also known as mini motos) in July as part of a survey carried out by the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) safety teams. Mini motorbikes are a reduced scale model of motorbikes that appeal to children because of their size. They are powered by petrol engines but cannot be legally used on roads. The bikes purchased were examined by an independent expert engineer to check compliance with BS 7407:1991 for vehicles directly propelled by energy derived from a fuel and capable of carrying children under the age of 14 years.

## 2. **Findings of Survey**

Each of the 3 bikes tested was found not to comply with the standard and therefore are in breach of the general safety requirement of the General Product Safety Regulations 2005. Examples of the types of common failures found with these bikes are as follows:-

- Handlebar levers were not ball ended in order to reduce body penetration when impacted and to reduce being snagged by external influences.
- Engine chains were not fully and properly guarded so there is the potential for major damage to hands and feet should they inadvertently make contact.
- No speed limiting device.
- Fuel systems vents fuel under the nose of the rider causing a dangerous situation from the point of view of inhalation and fire hazards.
- Sharp edges on plastic.
- Problems with braking systems.
- Lack of proper instructions.

## 3. **Premises selling mini motor bikes**

### 3.1 The bikes were purchased from: -

- A shop on Old Church Street, Miles Platting and Newton Heath ward, Manchester. This bike was a blue 'chopper' style mini motorbike. The

store only had one other bike in stock, which was seized by Trading Standards Officers. The bike was on sale for £300.

- A shop on Rugby Street, Cheetham ward, Manchester. This was a burgundy and yellow racing style mini motorbike. This bike cost £250. Two further bikes, a mini racing bike and a mini quad were seized when the premises were revisited.
- A specialist mini motorbike supplier at Longsight Business Centre, Manchester. The bike from this premises was a red racing style bike. The bike cost £250. The retailer stated he was no longer supplying mini motorbikes. The service has since checked that this is the case

3.2 Trading Standards Officers also visited an importer of mini motorbikes in Longsight, Manchester, with the expert engineer. Officers seized a blue racing style mini motorbike and the importer voluntarily withdrew another 59. This trader had supplied some bikes within the trade and this now has been subject to a recall process being monitored by Trading Standards with the assistance of the trader's solicitor. The trader has indicated a desire to carry on trading in mini motorbikes but is now aware of the specification standards that they must comply with.

3.3 Trading Standards Officers are currently investigating the supply chain of all of these bikes and are pursuing prosecutions. Information has also been passed to the Department of Trade and Industry as there is a statutory duty to inform them where action has been taken when safety infringements have been found. This information is then passed to other enforcement bodies within the Community so they are aware of the dangerous product.

#### **4. AGMA Survey on Mini Motor Bikes**

10 bikes were tested in all as part of the AGMA survey with all 10 bikes failing. Manchester Trading Standards Service have found that it is the cheaper end of the market which is causing the problems and it appears that bikes that are retailing below £300 are likely to fail. If anyone sees any mini motorbikes on retail sale they should inform Trading Standards. At least one other AGMA authority has launched a prosecution against their respective supplier.

#### **5. Dangerous Childs Doll**

5.1 Trading Standards are also advising wholesalers and retailers not to sell battery operated 'Beautiful/Lovely Baby' toy dolls pictured at the end of this report. The toys were submitted for testing and have failed the requirements of the Toys (Safety) Regulations 1995 due to sharp points on the ends of the LED earrings that are easily detached from the dolls ears. They should not be given to children so the advice to the public is not to buy these dolls. This advice now appears on Manchester Trading Standards website and a press release has been prepared. In addition the toys are not correctly CE marked.

## 6. Conclusion and Advice

### 6.1 Mini Motor Bikes

Parents are urged again this year not to consider buying these vehicles for their children at Christmas. The cheaper end of the market appears to be full of dangerous products and even if the bike was constructed to a high standard, it would still present problems for the user. The bikes are not type-approved to be used on a public road, and therefore their use on a road would always constitute an offence as they cannot be taxed and insured. Anyone who uses the bikes in a public park or common ground would probably present a danger or noise nuisance. For these reasons, Police forces throughout the country have been seizing the goods and destroying them. The way that they are used in most cases, amounts to an anti social pastime. Bikes given as Christmas presents could be crushed by New Year.

If any child is desperate to experience riding a mini or trial bike, then we urge the parents to get in touch with organised tracks or clubs where they can ride in relative safety and not do so in an anti social way.

### 6.2 Childs Doll

By taking early action, it is hoped that the doll does not find its way onto the local markets, but parents are warned not to buy this type of doll if they see it on sale, and to report it to Manchester Trading Standards Service.

