

Reference: I-2010- 01533

Department of  
Employment, Economic  
Development and Innovation

Jean Madden  
Street Swags

jeanmadden@streetswags.org

23 December 2010

Dear Ms Madden

**Subject: Investigation into the fire safety risk of swags**

As you would be aware the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has been investigating the fire safety risk associated with certain types of swags supplied to people that are homeless as well as swags supplied into the more general consumer market.

The investigation has now been concluded by both the ACCC and OFT. The ACCC has completed an assessment of the safety of swags as well as sleeping bags and is not intending to recommend intervention in the market at this time. This view is currently shared by the Queensland Office of Fair Trading and no further action is proposed.

In terms of some background to the investigation the Office of Fair Trading contacted two respected agencies experienced in gathering fire related and burn injury data seeking information on any fire related incidents associated with the flammability of the material used for swags, tents or camping products generally. No evidence of any incidents has been forthcoming. Given there are approximately 15 000 Street Swags being used by people that are homeless and the absence of any data to support the perceived risk posed by their flammability indicates there is no apparent harm, or risk to people, which requires a regulatory response at this time.

In terms of fire resistance it should be noted that many fabrics and garments are not required to be fire resistant when sold into the domestic environment (excluding mandatory safety requirements for children's nightwear) and would burn when a naked flame is applied for a period of time. This includes cotton clothing, blankets, mattresses, tents and sleeping bags. Many of these products would be used by the wider community as well homeless people.

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I would remind you that this information should not be taken as definitive legal advice.  
Neither should this information be relied on as an endorsement of your product.

If you require any further information regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact  
Dave Strachan Manager Product Safety on 07 3008 5829 or email  
[dave.strachan@deedi.qld.gov.au](mailto:dave.strachan@deedi.qld.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



Dave Strachan  
**Manager, Product Safety**