

Tuesday, September 28, 2010

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STOP & SHOP TO PAY \$190K IN FINES FOR SELLING ILLEGAL FAKE GUNS AND IMPROPERLY DISPLAYING BOX CUTTERS AND LASER POINTERS

Department of Consumer Affairs Requires Stop & Shop to Pay for Independent Monitor for Inventory Inspections and Advertising Review for One Year

The New York City Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) today announced a \$190,000 settlement with the Stop & Shop Company for the sale of illegal imitation firearms and improper display of box cutters and laser pointers. DCA will also require Stop & Shop to hire an independent monitor to inspect its inventory and review its New York City advertising.

"Fake guns that look real, laser pointers and box cutters are very dangerous, especially in the hands of children," said Commissioner Jonathan Mintz. "Thanks to our aggressive enforcement of the City's public safety law, compliance has steadily increased in recent years but we remain committed to ensuring that businesses are held responsible for any illegal sales."

Under New York City's Public Safety Law, it is illegal to sell or offer to sell a fake or imitation firearm that can be reasonably perceived to be an actual firearm, unless the majority of the exterior surface of the illegal, fake or imitation firearm is brightly colored. The range of acceptable colors include: white, bright red, bright orange, bright yellow, bright green, bright blue, bright pink and bright purple. DCA aggressively enforces the City's sales ban on dark-colored fake guns and since 2002, DCA inspectors have removed more than 7,500 imitation guns from the shelves of more than 200 stores throughout the City, and levied \$1.76 million in fines. Under New York City's Consumer Protection and Public Safety laws, it is also illegal to sell box cutters to anyone under the age of 21 and laser pointers to anyone under the age of 18 and, therefore, these items cannot be on open display accessible to the public without the assistance of the seller.

Stop & Shop will pay \$160,000 to settle the charge of selling 267 fake guns that violate the law and \$30,000 to settle the laser pointer and box cutter violations. The company also agreed to hire an independent monitor for one year, who will review all local invoices, policies and procedures and advertisements, perform random inspections, and submit reports and violations to DCA. Stop & Shop must continue to conduct random inspections at each of its New York City locations for three years.

To report a store or vendor selling fake guns that look real, call 311 or visit nyc.gov/consumers.

DCA enforces the Consumer Protection Law and other related business laws throughout New York City. Ensuring a fair and vibrant marketplace for consumers and businesses, DCA licenses more than 71,000 businesses in 55 different industries. Through targeted outreach, partnerships with community and trade organizations, and informational materials, DCA educates consumers and businesses alike about their rights and responsibilities. DCA's Office of Financial Empowerment (OFE) is the first local government initiative in the nation with a mission to educate, empower, and protect New Yorkers with low incomes so they can build assets and make the most of their financial resources. Toward that end, OFE seeks to increase access to high-

quality, low-cost financial education and counseling; improve access to income-boosting tax credits; connect households to safe and affordable banking and asset-building products and services; and enforce and improve consumer protections to enhance financial stability. For more information, call 311 or visit DCA online at nyc.gov/consumers.