



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

News Release

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STATE ISSUES WARNING ON BUYING COSMETIC CONTACT LENSES
Lenses Pose Potential Health Risks

HONOLULU – – As the Halloween season approaches, the Hawai'i State Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (DCCA) is warning consumers about the risks associated with wearing cosmetic, non-corrective contact lenses that are purchased without a valid prescription.

In 2008, the State passed a law prohibiting sales of nonprescription contact lenses in Hawai'i. However, these lenses continue to grow in popularity and are being marketed illegally as fashion or Halloween accessories at beauty salons, swap meets, convenience stores, through on-line businesses, and even by individuals advertising on the internet. DCCA reminds consumers that it is against the law to sell or offer to sell contact lenses without an appropriate license.

"This Halloween season, RICO is working in conjunction with agents from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration on enforcement," said Daria Loy-Goto, Complaints and Enforcement Officer for the Regulated Industries Complaints Office (RICO). "Citations issued by RICO impose fines and require the person to cease and desist unlicensed activity."

"When prescribed and dispensed by a licensed professional, decorative contact lenses can be worn safely," she added. "but they're not cosmetics or 'over-the-counter merchandise,' and they can cause injury, infection and even possible blindness if the quality is questionable or they're fitted or worn incorrectly."

For those consumers who wish to wear decorative contact lenses, DCCA makes the following recommendations:

1. Get an eye examination from a licensed eye care professional, even if you have perfect vision.
 2. Get a valid prescription that includes the brand and lens dimensions.
 3. Purchase lenses from a licensed eye care professional or from a vendor who requires a prescription for the lenses.
 4. Follow the directions for cleaning, disinfecting, and wearing the lenses, and visit a licensed eye care professional for follow-up eye examinations.
- For more information, contact the DCCA Consumer Resource Center at 587-3222 (toll-free 1-800-394-1902 for the Neighbor Islands) or check the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's website at <http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm048902.htm>.

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