



## Animal plush toys

- ✓ Product gallery
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- ✓ A complete guide to importing toys from China



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## Gifts & Premiums

# Gifts & Premiums

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### Buyer's Guide to sourcing animal plush toys

A gallery with 6 popular products handpicked by our Market Analysts, and 10 profiles of export-ready suppliers. Plus a complete guide to importing toys written by China sourcing expert Fredrik Grönkvist.

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# Classic animal plush toys modernized

Digital features and bright colors add variety to traditional plushies. Designs can also be customized.

China makers are boosting interest in traditional animal plush toys by introducing designs with a modern twist.

Bears, an all-time favorite, have become interactive. One model in this gallery, for example, can start a game of hide-and-seek with its owner. The product even covers its eyes as its playmate looks for a good hiding place. Another records and plays back sounds and words, allowing it to "talk."

More models feature bright eye-catching hues although pieces that follow the natural color of the animal they mimic are still available.

As for the choice of animals, bears still proliferate while alligators and giraffes expand the range.

Here is a selection of products that our Market Analysts have handpicked to represent the current trends in animal plush toys.



## Rainbow colors

Gravim's QZ1205070822 model features a rainbow-colored plush shell. PP cotton and PE beans are used for stuffing. The toy is washable and meets EN 71-1-2-3, CPSIA and ASTM F963 standards. It is 15cm high and weighs 85g. The product is packed in a PE bag. MOQ is 300 pieces.

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## Strawberry theme

The HS077207 model from HA's is a rabbit plush toy featuring a strawberry motif. Its ears are red and have white stitching that resemble strawberry seeds. Product dimensions are 30x16x45cm. The toy is made of kid-safe materials and is packed in a PP bag. One carton contains 30 pieces with a volume of 0.18m<sup>3</sup>.

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## Plays hide-and-seek, peek-a-boo

The QC1381 model from Quois can play hide-and-seek and peek-a-boo with children. Inside the bear's foot is a power button. When pressed, the toy will play sounds and cover its eyes with its hands. The product uses three AA batteries and meets EN 71, EN 62115 and RoHS standards. MOQ is 10 cartons. Panda, duck and cow versions are available.

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## Voice-recording, -repeating toy

A recording machine enables the ESYS-201-B model from Shenzhen ESYS to "talk" by repeating sounds and voices in different intonations. The plush squirrel is made of velvet and 100 percent polyester wadding. It measures 18x13x11cm, weighs 0.15kg, and uses 3 AAA batteries. Color and design can be buyer-specified. Price is \$3 to \$5 for an MOQ of 3,000 pieces.

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## Promotional blue alligator

Sino Red's SRF-Apt003 model is a blue alligator stuffed with 100 percent polyester and covered in plush. Small orders, and custom sizes and colors are accepted. Priced at \$0.30 to \$3.50, the toy can be personalized and given as a gift or promotional item.

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## Patchwork giraffe

YF's model MS1404-1 giraffe plush toy features patchwork in primary and secondary colors. On its neck hang two plastic rings that children can pull. The product measures 20x17x16cm. Each toy is packed in a card. A carton can hold up to 12 pieces with a net weight of 4.1kg. Price is \$5.50 to \$7.50. Small orders are accepted.

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## Supplier comparison table

Company name	Year established	Number of employees	Number of QC personnel	Number of design personnel	Annual revenue for all products (US\$ million)	Annual exports for all products (US\$ million)
<a href="#">Dongguan Baile</a>	2012	100 to 149	3 to 5	5 to 9	3	3
<a href="#">Dongguan Zhengqi</a>	2004	450	25 to 30	50	10	9
<a href="#">Gravim</a>	2007	100 to 149	5 to 9	5 to 9	10	10
<a href="#">HA's</a>	2008	5 to 9	1 to 5	1 to 5	0.7	0.5
<a href="#">Jingjiang Jiaxing</a>	1990	3,000	More than 99	50 to 59	100	90
<a href="#">Quois</a>	2005	120	5	3	500	500
<a href="#">Shenzhen ESYS</a>	2003	220	30	15	8	5
<a href="#">Sino Red Fashion</a>	2007	200 to 249	10	20 to 29	5	5
<a href="#">Woodfield</a>	2009	400	40	5	7	7
<a href="#">YE</a>	1996	1,000	10	6	100	95

Main export markets	OEM (%)	ODM (%)	OBM (%)	MOQ (US\$)	Lead time (days)	Key customers	
Europe (35%), America (5%)	70	30		1,000	25 to 30		<a href="#">CONTACT SUPPLIER</a>
America (60%), Europe (20%), Asia (10%)	50	30	20	5,000	45 to 50	Aurora, Trudi, Tomy, Dreamworks	<a href="#">CONTACT SUPPLIER</a>
Asia (70%), Australia (10%), Russia (10%)	50	40	10	2,000	35	Coca-Cola	<a href="#">CONTACT SUPPLIER</a>
Asia (40%), Europe (30%), America (10%)	70	20	10	2,000	25		<a href="#">CONTACT SUPPLIER</a>
North America (60%), America (20%), Eastern Europe (10%)	50	35	15	5,000	20	Coca-Cola, Disney, M, Wal-Mart, Global	<a href="#">CONTACT SUPPLIER</a>
Europe (30%), Australia (10%)	80	10	10	1,000	60	Bandai, Vivid, Headstart international	<a href="#">CONTACT SUPPLIER</a>
UK (50%), Russia (20%), USA (10%)	80	20		15,000	25	Disney	<a href="#">CONTACT SUPPLIER</a>
North America (65%), Europe (30%), others (5%)	70	20	10	2,000	20	Tommy Hilfiger, Tom Tailor, Coppingger, New Mix, Tennisgirls	<a href="#">CONTACT SUPPLIER</a>
North America (40%), Eastern Europe (30%), Middle East (10%)	80	10	10	3,000	60	Tommy, Wal-Mart , Disney	<a href="#">CONTACT SUPPLIER</a>
Asia (60%), America (20%), Europe (10%)	55	40	5	10,000	30 to 60	Wal-Mart, Kmart, Toys R Us, Target	<a href="#">CONTACT SUPPLIER</a>

# A complete guide to importing toys from China

Largely concentrated in Guangdong province, and Shantou city in particular, China's toy industry is the world's largest. Startups and multinationals alike are importing toys directly from Chinese manufacturers. In this article, we explain what importers must know about toy safety regulations, and labelling and testing requirements. We also explain why compliance with overseas standards and directives cannot be taken for granted when sourcing from China and other Asian countries.

### Toy safety regulations

For obvious reasons, specific safety standards and substance restrictions apply to toys and other children's products in most developed markets. The scope of products fitting the definition of a toy, or a children's product is wide. That said, most applicable directives and standards can be grouped in at least one of the following categories:

- Physical / mechanical properties (e.g. seams, buttons)
- Substance restrictions (e.g. phthalates, lead and cadmium)
- Electrical safety regulations (e.g. electromagnetic compatibility, overcharge protection)

Toy safety regulations are often regulated by frameworks or directives such as CPSIA in the US and EN 71 in the EU. However, these regulations often refer to ASTM and ISO standards, of which the importer is required to ensure compliance. As such, an assessment, both on applicable standards and a supplier capability to comply, must be made before mass production begins. Don't rely on the supplier to make such an assessment, as it's always the importer that is ultimately responsible for ensuring compliance.

### Labelling requirements

In addition, and often as a complement, to product and substance regulations, importers must ensure compliance with all applicable labelling requirements. These may either be part of specific toys and children's product standards, or part of other regulations applicable to several product categories. Below follows a brief overview of what may be required, but beware that labelling requirements differ between markets.

- Country of origin (e.g. "Made in China")

- Warning labels (e.g. age recommendation, loose parts)
- Other marks (e.g. CE, WEEE and FCC)

As previously mentioned, importers should never assume that the supplier is already aware that a product must be labelled according to regulations in a certain market. Instead, the buyer must provide all necessary documentation directly to the supplier, including ready-made graphical files. The stakes are high, as improper labelling is illegal, and may result in a forced recall, major fines, or both.

### Compliance testing and certification is often mandatory

A certificate or a substance test report is only valid for that one specific SKU or material sample submitted to the testing company. Changing a material, for example a button or fabric, may render a product noncompliant. Therefore, the importer must go through the compliance procedure each time a new product is developed or when a change is made.

Importers may also be required to implement a compliance program, with testing on some or all batches, even if no design or material changes have been made. Even if that is not explicitly required for your products in your markets, it's still highly recommended. Due to the lack of transparency, even between the manufacturer and its subcontractors, it's impossible to eliminate the risk of a components and material supplier changing specifications without making either you or the manufacturer aware.

As testing costs are multiplied on the number of different SKUs, materials and components, in addition to batch specific testing, compliance costs increase with variety. For companies struggling with keeping down costs, this can only be achieved by reducing the degree of variety. In practice, this forces importers to limit the number of different SKUs, materials, colors and components. Today, this is exactly what successful small and midsize companies do.

### Never take product compliance for granted when sourcing toy and children's products from China

Considering that compliance with overseas toy safety regulations is mandatory for accessing the world's largest markets, it would be rather logical to assume that said compliance can be taken for granted. Yet, I know from



experience that such assumptions can quickly result in immense losses, sometimes bankruptcy, as I'll get back to in a bit.

Ensuring compliance, with EN 71 Part 1, 2 and 3 for example, requires the supplier to possess both the necessary technical expertise and the ability to control its incoming materials, purchased from subcontractors. In China, the latter can be incredibly challenging, as the domestic materials supply chain is all but transparent. In short, far from all suppliers can ensure compliance with European, US and Australian toy safety regulations.

Yet, far too many importers fail to realize this. Back in 2011, I received a call from a wholesaler based in my native Sweden. This was around the same time that EN 71 was amended, for which reason the importer required updated documentation from his supplier. Quickly, it turned out that the supplier was not only unaware of the new changes, but a closer look also revealed that the previous documentation was not authentic.

What made things slightly worse was that the local authorities, for reasons I was not made aware of, had questioned the product certificates held by the importer

and gave them a deadline to amend this. Until that requirement could be fulfilled, the company was not allowed to distribute their goods.

Because the toys turned out noncompliant, the authorities ordered a recall, essentially forcing the wholesaler to buy back the delivered goods from its retailers. That is the last thing I know, as the purchasing manager never called me back since.

Unfortunately, they didn't do the groundwork, forcing them to learn this lesson the hard way. As said, previously in this article, it's always up to the importer to ensure compliance – not the supplier.

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Fredrik Grönkvist is the co-founder of ScandinAsian Enterprise in Shanghai. Since 2010, he and his team have helped hundreds of companies worldwide, primarily in the EU and US, to develop and manufacture products in China. He is also the main contributor on [www.chinainportal.com](http://www.chinainportal.com), a leading knowledge base for small- to medium-sized enterprises importing from Asia. For further questions, you can contact him on [www.chinainportal.com/contact-us/](http://www.chinainportal.com/contact-us/)





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