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KEEPING FIFE FAKE FREE



**INTELLECTUAL
PROPERTY
ENFORCEMENT
GROUP**

WHAT IS INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY?

Intellectual property refers to creative work which can be treated as an asset or physical property. Intellectual property rights fall principally into four main areas; copyright, trademarks, design rights and patents.

A trademark is any sign which can distinguish the goods and services of one trader from those of another. A sign includes words, logos, colours, slogans, three-dimensional shapes and sometimes even sounds and gestures.

Counterfeit goods are manufactured using trademarks, trade names or other devices, to make them look like genuinely produced, popular branded goods. Traditionally, the products counterfeited are sports and leisurewear, watches, DVDs, CDs and computer games.

You can find out more at the Intellectual Property Office's website at www.ipo.gov.uk.

DANGERS OF BUYING COUNTERFEITS

- Counterfeiters don't limit themselves to fake designer handbags and clothing anymore. Cigarettes, alcohol, electrical products, power tools, food, medicines, toys and sports equipment are also copied with potentially dangerous consequences for consumers.
- Fake alcohol can contain methanol, a chemical that can cause blindness, coma and death. Counterfeit bottles of alcohol often imitate well-known brands in an attempt to reassure people that the product is safe.
- Fake beauty products often contain sub-standard ingredients that could give you a rash or an allergic reaction. Some bottles of fake perfume have even been found to use ingredients like urine as a stabiliser.
- Look out for products sold in packaging featuring spelling or grammatical mistakes. Always buy your beauty products from a trusted source to help keep you safe from fakes.
- Electrical goods sold in the UK are subject to stringent safety testing. Counterfeit electrical goods often sidestep these testing requirements. This means fake electrical goods, including hair straighteners, mobile phones and camera chargers, may contain unsafe wiring that can lead to over-heating creating risks of fire,

electrocution and personal injury. Fake electrical goods may even be labelled with fake certification marks, so you think that they are safe.

- Children's toys are subject to strict safety testing. Counterfeit toys often won't have been tested. As a result fakes could contain small parts that are a choking hazard.

REASONS YOU SHOULD NEVER BUY COUNTERFEITS

- Counterfeiting is illegal and buying counterfeit products can support illegal activity.
- Counterfeiters do not pay taxes meaning less money for your community's schools, hospitals and parks.
- Counterfeiters do not pay their employees fair wages or benefits, have poor working conditions, and often use forced child labour.
- The profits from counterfeiting have been linked to funding organised crime, drug trafficking and terrorist activity.
- When you buy a fake, you become part of the cycle of counterfeiting and your money directly supports those things you would never want to support.

ANTI-COUNTERFEITING ENFORCEMENT IN FIFE

Trading Standards enforcement officers regularly inspect the various markets and events that take place throughout the year in Fife. They vary in size from large annual events to small, local car boot sales.

Many markets and sales have become an attractive venue for sellers of counterfeit goods. Our officers have become experienced at detecting illegal merchandise and will use their powers to seize the goods and have the owner prosecuted.

Our officers also carry out checks of online selling sites such as Facebay, E-Bay, Gumtree, etc. for counterfeit goods being sold in Fife.

The Brand-I website is delivered with the support of the National Trading Standards e-crime team, the site allows you to search for genuine products from brand owner approved online sellers. Check before you buy at

www.brand-i.org



FURTHER INFORMATION

If you need advice on any of the topics contained in this leaflet, in the first instance you should contact Citizens Advice Consumer Service:

Tel: 03454 04 0506

Online at **www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland**

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Further information is available at www.fifedirect.org.uk/ipcrime, where you can also report counterfeiting in Fife to Trading Standards via our reporting form.

Please be assured however, if you have bought counterfeit items in the past or have them in your possession for private use, you have not committed a criminal offence.

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