

For immediate release

COUNTERFEIT GOODS: Hard to resist, but potentially deadly

Crime Stoppers wants your tips on who's selling things like fake makeup or electrical goods at a pop-up store or elsewhere. They might hurt you, burn you...maybe even kill you

Vancouver, B.C. (April 23, 2018) – We've all seen - and maybe even bought - counterfeit purses, shoes, watches and clothing.

But more worrisome are things you swallow, put on your skin, or plug in. Things like cheap power bars or substandard circuit breakers in your home that can catch fire or pose an electrocution risk. Same goes for bargain-priced knock-off beauty products containing hazardous chemicals. Or maybe it's discount medicines ordered from an internet pharmacy that contain toxic ingredients or an incorrect dose in an odd looking pill bottle. In the world of counterfeit goods, everything can - and often is - counterfeited.

If you discover you've been duped into buying fake goods – dangerous or otherwise, or find out they're being sold at market stalls or at other seemingly "temporary" retailers, Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers encourages you to call 1-800-222-8477 to anonymously report the sellers. Tips may also be sent by texting a message to CRIMES (274637), Crime Stoppers' iPad/iPhone app, online at www.solvecrime.ca or by following the link on the Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers Facebook page.

"This is a safety issue as much as a criminal one, and we urge anyone with information to contact us anonymously so we can pass on the tip to police to investigate," says Linda Annis, executive director of Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers. "Most of these goods stay under the radar and don't get reported because people think they're getting a good deal. Clearly that's not the case if you plug in a power bar that bursts into flames or gives you a shock, or if a cheap charger damages your smartphone or laptop."

Counterfeiting is not a "victimless crime"

The [Canadian Anti-Counterfeiting Network](#) (CACN) says there's an increasing number of illegal counterfeit goods available across Canada.

- We import a lot of goods from Pacific Rim and other countries, so fake goods frequently enter the country at our ports of entry. Some of it stays here, while other counterfeits are just going through Canada's border for easy entry into the U.S.
- The resulting economic impact is significant. Loss in trade to legitimate brand owners is estimated in excess of **1 trillion dollars globally per year** (2013).
- Employment and tax revenues are also impacted as counterfeiters don't collect or pay taxes, or provide legitimate jobs. Counterfeit goods are frequently manufactured in appalling, unsanitary conditions and often involve child and forced labour.
- Online ordering is also part of the proliferation of these goods by making the purchase and delivery of counterfeit goods easy, but prevents us from examining them before we buy them.

(more)

“The makers of counterfeit goods don’t care what dangerous materials go into these goods. The risk is low and profitability is high,” says lawyer Karen MacDonald who works with industry associations such as CACN and acts for brand owners in her role as partner with Norton Rose Fulbright Canada LLP in Vancouver.

“Counterfeiting - luxury goods and otherwise - is far from a victimless crime. Law enforcement worldwide has linked counterfeiting to organized crime, drug trafficking and the funding of terrorism,” MacDonald adds. “In a recent high-profile example, the perpetrators of the Charlie Hebdo shooting in 2015 financed their weapons partly by selling fake Nike sneakers. In fact, they were previously under surveillance by the French anti-terrorist police, who ceased their surveillance when they incorrectly decided the suspects were dealing in counterfeit goods but nothing ‘more’.”

Protect Yourself

Many counterfeit products are very convincing and seem like the real thing unless you know what you’re looking for. Some clues:

- The prime indicator is price. Some things “just shouldn’t be that cheap.”
- Shopping at reputable stores with merchandise sourced from the real manufacturer is a good defense. With online shopping, it’s hard to ensure you’re buying legitimate product.
- Look for CSA or UL labels on electrical products. Many fakes have them, but anything without them is definitely suspect.
- Don’t just look on the box, check the product itself – and make sure the country of manufacture on the box matches what’s printed on the actual product.
- Look for poor spelling and grammar or odd UPC codes or printing on products, or previously opened packaging. They’re often red flags.
- Be aware, no product’s immune. Anything from toys to car and aircraft parts may be counterfeit.

About Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers

Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers is a non-profit society and registered charity that offers rewards for anonymous tip information about criminal activity and provides it to investigators in the communities of Metro Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. People can leave anonymous tips in a variety of ways including Crime Stoppers’ iPad/iPhone app, calling Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477, online at solvecrime.ca, following the link on the Metro Vancouver Crime Stoppers [Facebook page](#), or texting a message to CRIMES (274637). Crime Stoppers accepts tips in 115 different languages. If the information provided results in a charge or an arrest, a reward of up to \$2,000 may be offered. Tipsters stay anonymous by using code numbers to collect their rewards. <http://www.solvecrime.ca>.

About the Canadian Anti-Counterfeiting Network

The Canadian Anti-Counterfeiting Network (CACN) is a coalition of individuals, businesses and associations that fight product counterfeiting, fraud and copyright piracy in Canada and abroad. CACN anti-counterfeiting initiatives in Canada include raising awareness of counterfeiting and piracy, addressing the negative impact of counterfeiting on the Canadian and global economy and society, lobbying policy makers at the federal and provincial levels to recommend policy for the enhancement and effectiveness of Canada’s anti-counterfeiting and anti-piracy regime, and organizing a Customs Officer Training program to educate Canadian customs officers on counterfeit products. <http://cacn.ca>

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