

**TIPS FOR CONSUMERS**

RECOGNISING COUNTERFEITS

No economic sector is spared from the work of counterfeiters and pirates. The assortment of fakes and imitations includes everything from medicines, spare parts, CDs and DVDs, to food products and cosmetics.

1. WHY THE WARNING AGAINST BUYING COUNTERFEITS?

- Importing counterfeit goods is illegal in Switzerland. Customs can seize fake goods and destroy them, even when it's 'just' a small souvenir for personal use.
- The counterfeiting industry is part of organised crime. By buying fake goods, you're supporting criminals who couldn't care less about jobs and working conditions.
- Counterfeit goods are of inferior quality. Manufacturers don't care about your health and safety. Fake medication, tools, toys and spare parts can be particularly dangerous..
- Counterfeiters don't invest in research and development. Instead, they steal ideas and don't pay any taxes or social security contributions from their illegally-earned money. As a result, the economy pays the price and jobs are destroyed.
- Counterfeiters can't be held accountable for warranty and liability claims because their identities are unknown.

2. HERE'S HOW TO RECOGNISE COUNTERFEITS AND PIRATE COPIES



PRICE

Is there a realistic price difference in comparison to the original product? Supposed bargains often turn out to be fakes, although an expensive price alone is no guarantee for authenticity. This can also serve to camouflage the fact that something is a fake.



PLACE OF SALE

Luxury products are rarely sold at the beach or at markets. Medicines should be exclusively purchased from specialist retailers. If you want to be sure that a shop is an authorised dealer, enquire with the original manufacturer. Internet sites usually indicate from where you can safely purchase products.



SALES TACTICS

Faced with confusing explanations for the cheap price, the place of sale or the quantities available? Then exercise caution. The same holds true if the manufacturer or seller can only be identified with difficulty or is hiding behind an ominous address with which it's not possible to make direct contact.



PACKAGING

Genuine products are not sold in badly-printed damaged or cheap packaging. Counterfeiters also don't usually conform to mandatory or customary labelling requirements, such as place of manufacture, composition, importer etc.

**LABELLING**

Packaging, labels or enclosures with spelling or language mistakes often indicate that the product is a fake. Manufacturers of genuine products work with professional copywriters and translators.

**MISSING PRODUCT ENCLOSURES**

If guarantee slips, certificates and instructions are not delivered with the item, exercise caution. However, product enclosures and seals of quality are not necessarily a guarantee for authenticity because they, of course, can be forged too.

**QUALITY**

If the zip on the handbag is already about to fall apart after the first use or the seams have already come undone, then it's probably a fake. Counterfeiters usually use cheaper materials than the original manufacturer or those specified on the label.

3. RECOGNISING COUNTERFEITS AND ILLEGAL OFFERS IN THE INTERNET

Counterfeiters are increasingly using the internet to sell their products. Here are some tips that will help you to recognise genuine products from fake ones in online shops and sometimes on online auction sites:

**PRICE**

Is there a realistic price difference in comparison to the original product? Good quality products have their price, even on the internet. A comparison of prices and assortment with other suppliers can help you to identify possible fraudulent goods.

UNUSUAL DOMAIN NAMES OR WRITING STYLES

Unusual domain names such as XY-outletswitzerland.eu or XY-cheap.com for online shops are suspicious. The same applies to top level domains such as '.to'. Typical pirate writing styles such as 'warez', 'gamez', 'appz' or 'moviez' are also suspicious.

WHOIS SEARCH

With a so-called Whois search (e.g. www.who.is), you can find out where the seller has registered his website. Reputable providers use their correct address. If the seller hasn't registered a valid address or if it sounds exotic or doesn't match the address in the masthead, then caution should also be exercised.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If a website doesn't have a masthead with an address, e-mail address and telephone number of the seller, it's better not to do business with them. If the seller's e-mail address is linked to a free e-mail account, doubts should be raised as to how reputable they are.

**ERRONEOUS WEBSITES**

Is the information on the website or in the General Terms and Conditions written incorrectly or do they sound like they were machine translated? If so, you're most likely dealing with an online shop for counterfeit goods.

**CHECK THE SEAL OF QUALITY**

More and more online shops are displaying seals of quality. Click on the seal to see if it redirects you to the website of the certifying organisation. If not, someone is appearing under false pretences and the seal is misleading.

**POOR-QUALITY OR UNLICENSED PICTURES**

If the photographs of the goods for sale are blurry, then exercise caution. Such sellers will often use pictures from the real manufacturer on their own websites without permission. Check the source of the pictures by doing an image search using the product name. If you find the same pictures on the original manufacturer's website, then they were probably copied from there.

**SUSPICIOUS PRODUCT DESCRIPTION**

If a product is advertised as a 'copy', 'imitation', 'replica', 'cheap', or 'lookalike' then it's clearly a fake. Also exercise caution if designations like 'imported goods', 'in the style of', 'type' or 'similar to' are used. If a seller says that he cannot vouch for the authenticity of the product or that there might be slight deviations from the original, then it's better not to buy it.

**DUBIOUS SELLER REPUTATION**

Buyers can rate sellers in online forums and online auction sites. This gives you a first impression of the seller and his business practices. You can also search for the name of the seller on the internet. Many disappointed buyers share information in forums and warn others of sellers who are hawking fakes.

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