

Cracking down on criminals who target self-storage industry

The Intellectual Property Office (IPO), National Trading Standards, London Trading Standards and the Self-Storage Association UK (SSAUK), have teamed up to launch a new code of practice. The initiative's aim is to reduce the appeal of self-storage facilities to criminals who deal in counterfeit and other illicit goods.

[‘The Tick Box: Keep it Real Keep it Legal’](#) code of practice sets out a few simple procedures. The aim is to prevent the fraudulent storage of counterfeit and other illicit or unsafe goods. It also helps self-storage facility owners be sure of who is really using their premises. Counterfeit goods are often seized in self-storage facilities, or on their way to them. This scheme helps self-storage facilities to identify the individuals behind the crimes. It also helps enforcement authorities recover the goods before they enter the marketplace.

The scheme is already yielding results. Targeted enforcement action has disrupted criminal networks. This has resulted in the seizure of thousands of counterfeit items. These are estimated to be worth millions of pounds to criminals.

Storage facilities that participate in the scheme are provided with the ‘Tick Box’ logo. Posters are displayed within the premises. These act as an assurance to legitimate customers and a deterrent to anyone attempting to store counterfeit goods.

Forty-five local and national self-storage providers have already signed up to the first phase of the code of practice. More than 1,200 self-storage facility staff have received additional training under the scheme. The next phase will see the scheme continue to be rolled out across the UK.

Trading Standards will be promoting the scheme to self-storage operators at the European Self-Storage Conference and Trade Show. It is being held in Birmingham on 20 and 21 September 2021.

IPO CEO, Tim Moss said:

Unsafe and illicit goods, such as counterfeits, create real social and environmental harms in our communities and criminals have used self-storage units as part of their activities. Self-storage providers signing up to the code of practice will now have absolute confidence they are doing everything possible to deter criminals who target them in this way, while reassuring legitimate customers that their belongings are in safe hands.

I am delighted that the new code of practice is being co-delivered

through an effective partnership between self-storage providers, government and local enforcement, complementing our comprehensive approach to disrupting IP crime.

SSA UK CEO, Rennie Schafer said:

The self-storage industry welcomes the opportunity to work with Trading Standards and local enforcement agencies to identify and deter criminals looking to use the industry for storage of unsafe and illicit goods. Many of these goods can cause real damage to the local communities that the self-storage businesses are part of. As an industry we want to do all we can to eliminate such activity from our stores and the community as a whole.

Lord Toby Harris, Chair, National Trading Standards, said:

Trading Standards officers are finding counterfeit goods in, or on route to, self-storage facilities. By supporting self-storage facilities to prevent the storage of illicit goods on their premises, we can help clamp down on the sale of counterfeit goods that continue to deceive consumers and undermine legitimate businesses. We encourage all responsible self-storage providers to [sign up to the Tick Box scheme](#) – it's free to join and easy to implement and will provide peace of mind to facility owners about what is being stored on their premises.

Notes to editors

The scheme is already yielding results; in April 2021, three self-storage units were raided and 5000+ illegal and counterfeit items were seized in a joint Trading Standards, Police Intellectual Property Crime Unit (North West) and the Anti-Counterfeiting Group, which represents brands, with participation from the self-storage store.

In April 2021, 22 self-storage units were raided in Southall by Ealing Trading Standards and the Met Police, netting fake goods valued at millions of pounds and offering valuable intelligence about their supply. In June 2021, five more containers were raided in Glasgow, housing thousands of counterfeit goods

Within the initial rollout, there are 343 UK-wide premises signed up, with approximately 1,200 staff, all of whom are receiving training to deliver against the code of practice. The second phase will see the scheme continue to be rolled out across the UK.

The IPO is the official UK government body responsible for intellectual property rights including patents, designs, trade marks and copyright. The IPO, Trading Standards and the SSA partnered to introduce the Tick Box scheme

to reduce the appeal of self-storage facilities for counterfeit and illicit goods. The scheme focusses on building stronger relationships between self-storage owners and their local Trading Standards enforcement partners, and aims to combat the social economic and social harms to communities that this type of crime can cause.