

Press release: Fake vehicle parts are on the rise

The Intellectual Property Office (IPO) has issued new guidance as part of a cross-government and industry campaign. The campaign warns consumers of the serious dangers of fake car parts.

The amount of fake vehicle parts available on the market is on the rise. The European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) estimated that more than €2 billion is lost every year due to counterfeit tyres and batteries alone.

The most common fake vehicle parts worldwide include filters, brake pads, lights, wheel rims and air bags. As shown by [BMW](#) many of these parts have direct safety implications and, if they fail, can lead to serious accidents.

Spotting fakes isn't easy. Here, on the right Audi shows a genuine coupling rod and on the left, is the fake product. Fake coupling rods can affect the steering capability of the vehicle.

To help combat this problem the IPO joined forces with the auto industry and trading platforms and other parts of government. Together they have launched a campaign to warn consumers about the dangers of fake vehicle parts. The collaboration has led to the Intellectual Property Office issuing [new guidance](#). The guidance gives tips on how to avoid buying fake parts when shopping online and on the high street.

The collaboration is the most extensive of its kind to tackle fakes and includes:

- Audi
- BMW
- Independent Automotive Aftermarket Federation (IAAF)
- Manufacturers Against Product Piracy (MAPP)
- TecAlliance
- Independent Garage Association (IGA)
- Amazon
- eBay
- Trading Standards
- the Police Intellectual Property Crime Unit (PIPCU)
- M-Sport
- Motor Sport Association UK (MSA)
- International Automobile Federation (FIA)
- NGK Spark Plugs
- TMD Friction and Phillips.

PIPCU, which is run by the City of London Police, fights against these types of crimes. In February 2018 Robert Czernik was investigated and sentenced to two counts under Section 92 of the Trade Marks Act for selling fake airbags.

He received five months in prison for each count to run concurrently, suspended for 12 months.

The Audi Brand Protection Team said:

Identifying counterfeits has proven to be a real challenge. The sellers' websites are becoming more and more professional, appearing legitimate to many buyers at first glance. But there are some clues that give counterfeiters away and should put buyers on alert, such as a comparatively cheap price or a typo appearing on the spare part or in the description.

The counterfeiters aren't choosy when it comes to selecting fakes. According to our investigations, a large number of spare parts are counterfeited in the automotive business. These include service-relevant components, such as oil filters or air filters, crash-relevant components such as bumpers, radiator grille or bodywork, but also safety-relevant parts such as suspension arms, exhaust systems or brake linings.

Spare parts produced using inferior materials clearly pose high risks for Audi consumers. We are pleased to be part of this campaign to warn and protect our customers.

Dr Ros Lynch, Director of Copyright and Enforcement at the Intellectual Property Office said:

It's clear counterfeit vehicle parts can pose a serious risk to drivers, passengers and other road users, with potentially life-threatening results. Criminals who produce counterfeit vehicle parts have no concerns about public safety and they use this as an opportunity to profit at the expense of others.

We are committed to protecting the public from these dangers. This collaboration between government, industry and law enforcement offers us an opportunity to raise awareness, change consumer behaviour and remove these dangerous products from the market.

Temporary Detective Chief Inspector Nick Court of the City of London Police's Intellectual Property Crime Unit (PIPCU) said:

Counterfeit car parts increase the risk of people experiencing a serious injury. It's essential that car owners and those who work in this industry are made aware of the signs to look out for and the risks.

The City of London Police is at forefront of fighting this type of crime and offering the public advice on how to avoid falling victim.

Notes to editors

1. The UK Intellectual Property Office is responsible for Intellectual Property (IP) rights in the United Kingdom, including patents, designs, trade marks and copyright.
2. The European Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) study that estimated more than €2 billion is lost every year due to counterfeit tyres and batteries is available on the [EUIPO website](#).
3. The [new guidance](#) available on fake vehicle parts.
4. The Police Intellectual Property Crime Unit is a department of the City of London Police. It was established in 2013 with the responsibility to investigate and deter serious and organised intellectual property crime in the UK. The unit is funded by the UK Intellectual Property Office.
5. A press release by the [Police Intellectual Property Crime Unit](#) gives details about the investigation of Robert Czernik under Section 92 of the Trade Marks Act for selling fake airbags.