

# Avoid Becoming a Victim of Counterfeit Items!

CH2M HILL Plateau Remediation Company is the prime contractor for the safe, environmental cleanup of the Central Plateau at the Hanford Site. The Hanford Site, part of the U.S. Department of Energy's environmental management program, is the largest environmental cleanup project in the nation.

## ***Remember, it is a buyer beware world!***

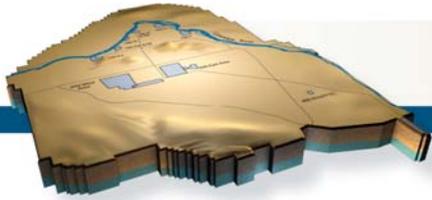
In today's globalized economy, we cannot live without imported products. Most people do not realize how thin the safety net of regulation and inspection really is. Less than three percent of imported products receive any form of government inspection prior to sale.



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## ***If the deal is too good to be true...it is!***

Avoid flea markets, street vendors and deep discount stores. The sellers of counterfeit wares know where to market their products. They look for individuals who are hungry for a brand name item but do not want to pay a brand name price for it.



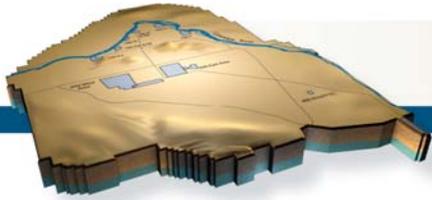
## ***Remember, you do not know who is at the other end of an internet purchase***

The internet provides anonymity to the sellers of counterfeit products. Unlike Europe, U.S. law does not hold internet-marketing organizations, responsible for the quality of the products sold on their websites. These organizations will remove an individual vendor when a sufficient number of complaints are lodged, but they will not take responsibility for the counterfeit products you may have purchased. EBay has a number of counterfeit product guides to help you avoid being a victim of the sellers of these products.



## ***Avoid buying medications over the internet***

Ten percent of all medications taken worldwide are counterfeit. If you do buy medications on-line, be sure that the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy Verified Internet Pharmacy Practice Sites ([VIPPS](#)) recommends the pharmacy you choose to use. Inspect all medication purchases and report any change in color, shape, imprinting or odor to your pharmacist. If you take generic medications these attributes may change from one manufacturer to another. Your pharmacist should inform you of any changes when you refill your prescription. If they do not, get clarification prior to taking the medication. Please note that the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) does not regulate supplements. The FDA only steps in when a specific supplement proves to cause physical harm or contains a regulated ingredient.



## ***Only purchase office and home electrical products with a current UL label***



Due to counterfeiting, Underwriters Laboratories (UL) changed their label design three times since 1996. The new gold label should be attached to the cord or body of most office and home electrical products (please see the picture to the left). Holiday lights may have the UL marking in red or green instead of the universal black. A red UL mark indicates the product is approved for outdoor as well as indoor service. The green UL mark indicates the product is only to be used indoors. A small number of home electrical products may bear an Intertek

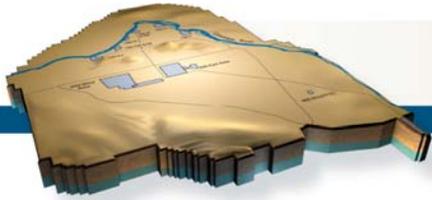
(ETL) approval. This label is also acceptable. An Intertek label includes black print on a white background bearing the circular ETL logo.

## ***Only purchase products that bear a manufacturer's name, mark, or symbol***

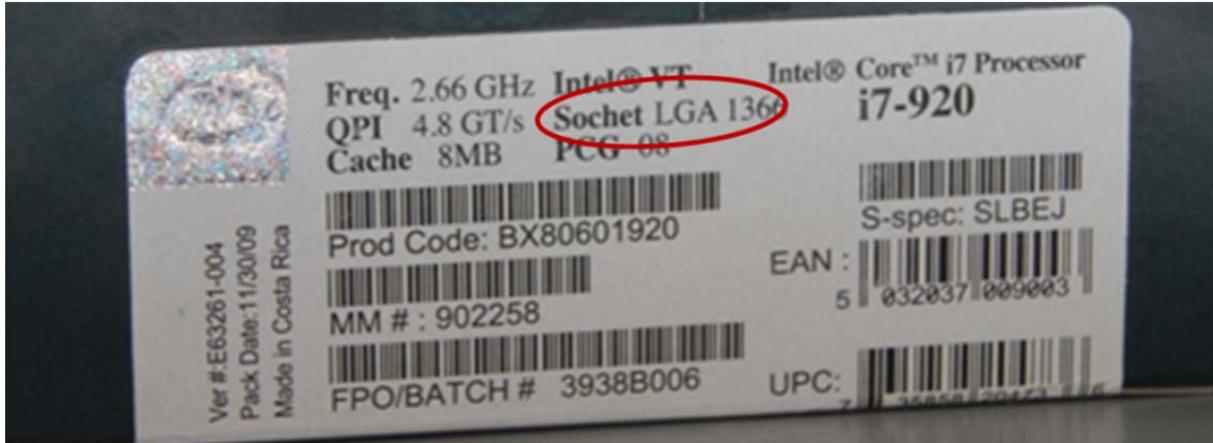
Most manufacturers are proud of their products and strive to gain name recognition as well as foster repeat business. This is not true of counterfeiters. The very first thing most counterfeiters try to do is make their products untraceable. Their products may bear the nation of origin but that is all. This is a common practice with metal components such as pipe fittings and flanges. This is also true of hoisting and rigging equipment such as shackles, turnbuckles and

chain. Sadly, this has also occurred with the purchase of some safety equipment such as arc-flash retardant coveralls. Learn the national standards associated with products you are purchasing. Clearly specify these requirements on the procurements you make.

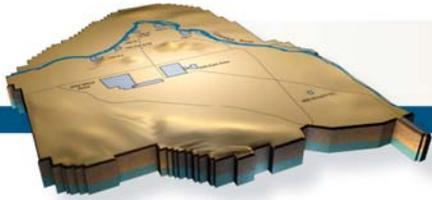




***Look at your product's packaging very carefully***

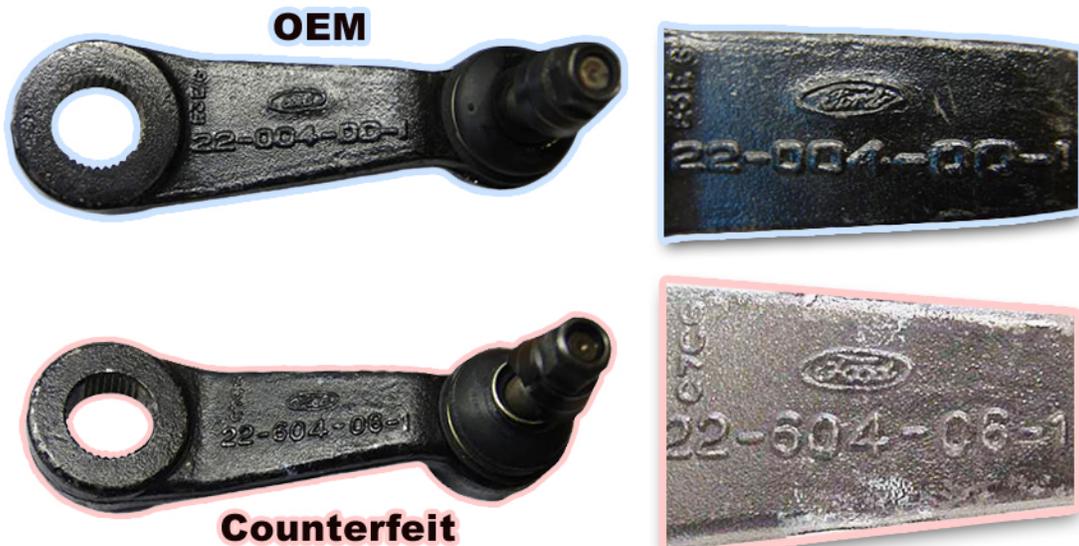


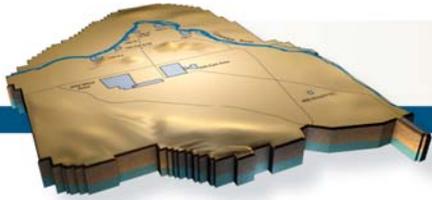
Many times, counterfeit products come in packaging that is unlabeled or the label is misspelled or miss-colored. The package may also be missing the company's normal holographic markings. Real manufacturers do not make these kinds of mistakes. Their image matters. Holographic stickers are added to products to discriminate the "true" products from those that are imitations or counterfeits. Keep in mind counterfeiters do not care about your return business. You should be very suspicious of products that have been repackaged. Many remanufactured products come in their original packaging.



***When buying auto repair parts, strive to purchase only Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) components.***

Roughly, 10 percent of all auto repair parts purchased worldwide are counterfeit. It does not matter the make or model, all are susceptible. When having your vehicle repaired or serviced, ask your mechanic if they are aware of the counterfeit automotive parts problem. To minimize the chance of getting the off part, request to only have OEM products installed. You also have the right to inspect replaced parts as well as the packaging the new components came in. Counterfeiting has also been experienced in the semi and large truck repair markets.





## ***Remember, food items can be counterfeited as well***



Over 15 percent of all food consumed in the United States is imported. Sixty percent of the fruits and vegetables and over 80 percent of the seafood is imported. We would all do well to understand where the products on our dinner table come from. Seafood is the most likely candidate for counterfeiting. When buying seafood, try to purchase the whole fish. Fish fillets are easiest to make substitution

on. You may think you are buying red snapper fillets, but tests by the federal government and consumer groups prove you only get actual red snapper less than 40 percent of the time. Some businesses stretch the truth: “Lobster Bites” that are made out of Langostinos. This creature is related to the hermit crab not the lobster. Other products that have been purposefully misrepresented or contaminated within the last few years include honey, olive oil, vanilla, maple syrup, pickles, and strange as it might seem, blueberries.

## ***Use your smart phone***

Many smart phones can download an application that scans UPC barcodes and then provide the user with price comparison information. Sometimes when you scan an item with this technology it comes up with “Not Found.” This tells you either the manufacturer was not interested in marketing their product and did not put it into the UPC database, or you may have a suspect item on your hands. In either case, it is probably best that you move on to the next product.

