

0950 COUNTERFEIT AND NON-COMPLIANT ELECTRICAL PRODUCTS

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The market in counterfeit watches, designer clothes, CDs and DVDs has enjoyed widespread publicity. But the market in counterfeit electrical installation products is far more serious because it may involve risk to life. Some products, for example fuses and circuit-breakers, are intended to provide electrical protection, so must function correctly. Others like electrical appliances, wiring accessories, switches, cables and control gear perform a more functional role but safety in use is crucial, along with reliability and performance. Counterfeit electrical products are almost always substandard, posing a risk of harm to consumers and installers alike. Counterfeiters are able to copy the external appearance of an electrical product and its packaging fairly well, but the internal design, materials or chemical composition is substantially different from the genuine product and can pose serious dangers. The facts annually, an estimated 30m worth of counterfeit

electrical products reach the UK. It is believed that more than 95% of counterfeit electrical installation products originate from China. Up to 15% of world trade is thought to be in counterfeit goods and in some cases this may be used to help finance other criminal activity. As an industry, we need to consider how we can work collectively to address areas of specific concern, in particular the growing trade of counterfeit and non-compliant goods over the Internet and the validity of CE marking when applied to electrical products. It is also important for industry to communicate consistent messaging on these issues.