



Counterfeit or Illegal PPE

Counterfeit or illegal items of PPE in the UK market are on the increase. Established product brands and manufacturers are often the target of counterfeiters looking to make money from individuals and companies by providing sub-standard products that do not perform as they should.

All PPE must be correctly tested and certified to meet the appropriate European standard to ensure that they perform as expected. Unfortunately, the quantity of non-approved sub-standard products being brought into the UK construction market is on the increase which contravenes safety legislation and if used could endanger lives and expose companies to the risk of prosecution.

Numerous items of PPE are available that claim they have CE approvals but in reality, they have not been appropriately certified, to compound this issue further some items are in fact counterfeits of existing products.

To help combat this, the British Safety Industry Federation (BSIF) has created the Registered Safety Supplier (RSS) scheme. Companies displaying the scheme's logo have signed a binding declaration that the safety equipment they offer meets the appropriate standards, fully complies with the PPE regulations and is appropriately CE marked.

How to spot counterfeit or illegal PPE

The hardest part of a piece of PPE to fake is the CE (Conformité Européenne) Certificate and therefore knowing what a CE certificate and marking should look like will hopefully help you to spot counterfeit equipment quickly.



All PPE must be supplied with instructions for use and be appropriately tested and marked with the CE marking—without it the product is illegal to use as protective equipment in the workplace.

CE certificates are also required to contain a number of pieces of information, which are listed below.

Here's what you need to be checking:

- Is the CE mark present on the product marking/labelling?
- If present on the product, is the CE mark in the correct font and at least five mm high?
- For high-risk products, including respirators and chemical protective clothing, is the CE mark accompanied by a four-digit number?
- Are written instructions for use provided with the product?
- Are the instructions for use printed in clear and legible text?
- Are the instructions for use written in the language used in the manufacturer's country of origin?
- Is the name and address of the manufacturer detailed on the user instructions?
- Does the certificate clearly contain the notified body's name and number (four digits)?
- Is the notified body from within the EU?
- Does the certificate show signs of tampering, for example, differing fonts and sizes, colour changes etc.?
- Does the certificate contain a date and notified body signature?
- Does the certificate have its terms and conditions included?
- Does the certificate show a clear description of the product, including model references, specifications, and test references?
- Does the certificate state that it is an EC type-examination certificate?
- Does the certificate include the manufacturer's name and address?
- If a validity period is stated on the certificate, is it still current?

When buying expensive PPE that's going to last you a long time, it's always worth requesting to see the CE Certificate directly from the supplier or manufacturer that you are buying it from.

If in doubt, to confirm the authenticity of a piece of PPE, you can call the notified body, who will be happy to check the certificate against their records.

Example of a fake PPE certificate



The UCN number on the certificate is not valid when checked on the celab.com website

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