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September 2008

Biz Buzz



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Counterfeit Products in the Marketplace

Every two years, Electrical Contractor Magazine presents a reader survey, "Profile of the Electrical Contractor." The most recent survey, published in July 2008, cites contractors' rising concern regarding counterfeit electrical parts. According to the survey, 60 percent of contractors said they were "extremely" or "very concerned" about the effectiveness and ability of counterfeit products to meet codes. At GE, we share their concerns, as we're sure you do.

GE's Actions In Response To Counterfeits Throughout The World

GE Supports Anti-Counterfeiting Raids in Latin America

Authorities in Colombia and Ecuador, where counterfeit circuit breakers have been sold, have recently conducted several raids. More than 50,000 circuit breakers have been seized and several individuals have been arrested as a result of these raids. Criminal charges have been filed. Enforcement actions such as these help clear the path for increased sales of genuine GE circuit breakers throughout Latin America.

GE Cooperates With U.S. Customs and Border Protection

GE recently learned of several suspicious shipments of circuit breakers to the U.S. In these instances, GE cooperated fully with the U.S. Customs and Border Protection authorities to determine whether the goods were counterfeit or genuine GE products. Any counterfeit goods can be seized and destroyed and further actions taken where warranted.

Domain Name Violations

Some counterfeiters are advertising on the Internet, and GE has initiated actions against several companies for using GE trademarks in domain names without obtaining permission from GE. In these situations, GE files complaints with the administrative agencies responsible for resolving disputes concerning ownership and proper use of domain names to stop violation of GE's intellectual property rights.

Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards Training Workshop

GE Area Sales Manager Diego Espinosa participated in an anti-counterfeiting seminar sponsored by the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards (TTBS) in February 2008. The seminar included a presentation on technical issues and safety risks associated with counterfeit products; presentations from circuit breaker manufacturers, including GE, focusing on how to distinguish genuine GE circuit breakers from counterfeits; and a presentation by TTBS on regulations in Trinidad and the penalties faced by violators.

Cross-Pole Investigative Efforts

Investigators working on behalf of GE with Asian and Latin American local governments on anti-counterfeit activities met, along with their respective legal teams, to share findings and link information regarding potential counterfeiters and the source and distribution of counterfeit products. The meeting provided a convenient forum for sharing best practices, as well as specific information aimed at reducing the trafficking of counterfeit products between Asia and Latin America.

How Can Distributors Help?

Process to follow if a Suspected Counterfeit is identified

When you suspect that a product is a counterfeit of a genuine GE product, please follow these steps:

1. Call your GE account manager and report the circumstances.
2. Acquire a sample of the suspected counterfeit product, if possible.
3. Collect the following information and communicate it to your account manager:
 - Country and city in which counterfeit was discovered
 - Exact location where counterfeit goods and/or packaging was discovered (address, store name, etc.)
 - Who discovered the potential counterfeiting and when (name, date, circumstances)
 - The suspected counterfeit product types and brands (Please obtain a sample or photographs.)
 - Any information regarding magnitude of problem (quantity, cost, volume, amount)
 - Any further information (distributor name in region, point of contact, etc.)
 - Who the report was prepared by
4. Mail the sample to GE Consumer & Industrial, 41 Woodford Avenue, Plainville, CT 06062, Attention: Senior Counsel Intellectual Property, via priority mail or provide to your account manager.

We also offer a training guide, "Customs' Anti-Counterfeit U.S. Breaker Training" with instructions on how to identify a genuine GE circuit breaker and distinguish it -- for purposes of further counterfeit evaluation -- from a counterfeit circuit breaker. As an example, one key distinguishing feature of a genuine GE residential circuit breaker is laser etching of the GE logo and rating on the front surface of the breakers. The report is available online in [English](#) or [Spanish](#), or you can obtain a copy from your account manager.