The Rising Trend of Counterfeit Flame-Resistant Clothing

Many IAMU members wear Flame-Resistant Clothing (FRC) daily while trusting their health and safety to the garment without a second thought. IAMU encourages all of you to do the research necessary to ensure your FRC is purchased from a reputable source because it can change the outcome of an accident. If you suspect your FRC may be counterfeit, contact the manufacturer immediately and share the results with IAMU so we can share information with others.

From the blog, “Busted! Fake FRC Seller Charged by US Attorney,” back in March 2018, Tyndale published on its blog a discussion about the rising trend of counterfeit FRC. Certain dealers are creating non-FR replicas of name-brand garments and selling them as FRC – thereby putting wearers at grave risk for injury, or even death.

Unfortunately, since then, this practice has not been eliminated, but rather has become more sophisticated and brazen. This is shown by a story reported by WPRI Eyewitness News in Providence, Rhode Island.

The WPRI report revealed that a man named Ramin Kohanbash is facing federal charges, including trafficking in counterfeit goods related to a scheme to sell misrepresented clothing to U.S. Military. Kohanbash, the owner of a New Jersey-based company called California Surplus, purchased samples of legitimate military uniforms and sent them to China where low-cost reproductions were manufactured. Kohanbash then sold the phony garments to U.S. suppliers, who in turn, sold them to military.

According to prosecutors, Kohanbash had his Chinese partners reproduce the labels of legitimate manufacturers to sew into the fakes. He also had them add labels claiming, for instance, thousands of counterfeit hoods were NFPA 2112 certified when the hoods actually offered no protection against flash fire hazards.

Tyndale suggests a few easy steps you can take to help ensure your safety:

◆ First and foremost, if a deal seems too good to be true, it almost certainly is. If you conduct a search, and receive results priced at $10 through $50, for instance, you can be pretty sure the $10 item is not going to provide you with reliable FR protection regardless of whether it’s being presented as “name-brand” FRC. As described in the story above, unscrupulous fraudsters won’t hesitate to add counterfeit logos to their fake products.

◆ Check out the seller. All major manufacturers of true FR clothing carefully vet the companies that they allow to sell their products. If the seller offering low-cost FR clothing seems to be little more than an email address and does not have a professional website or offer a warranty or returns process, it’s unlikely that they are an authorized seller of legitimate FRC.

◆ Check the ratings. Most major retail sites allow users to rate their purchases. If you find multiple comments suggesting the item is not genuine FRC, stay away.

Wherever you choose to purchase your FRC, please use caution and the suggestions above to make sure you’re really getting the protection you need to stay safe on the job.

See the entire blog post and videos from Tyndale and WPRI Eyewitness News here: http://tyndaleusa.com/blog/2019/07/22/busted-fake-frc-seller-charged-by-us-attorney/