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CBP Issues Black Friday Warning About Counterfeit Goods During Holiday Shopping Season

Customs and Border Protection highlights risks of fake products, citing over \$3 billion in counterfeit goods seized in FY2024, with watches, jewelry, handbags, and wallets leading the list

Community Center / **Published On November 29, 2024 06:44 AM /**

Staff Consortium **November 29, 2024**

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Now that the busiest shopping season of the year is upon us, the Customs & Border Protection Agency is warning consumers chasing Black Friday and Cyber Monday deals to be wary of fake goods.

“The risks of purchasing counterfeit products are not always immediately apparent, but they can have serious consequences,” said Efrain Rivas, Assistant Director of Field Operations for Trade at the CBP San Juan Field Office. “From economic impacts and

legal ramifications to potential health and safety hazards, it's essential to understand these dangers before making a purchase," he continued."

Mr. Rivas noted that consumers are particularly vulnerable when shopping online, as counterfeit goods are prevalent in those arenas. The rise in e-commerce has meant a flood of "low-value, small packages being imported into the U.S.," according to CBP.

The agency says that over 90% of counterfeit seizures occur in the spaces where these packages travel - international and express mail environments. CBP says people should stick to reputable e-commerce vendors to reduce their risk of inadvertently purchasing counterfeit medicines, cell phone chargers, Christmas lights, beauty products, and other goods that "may impact public health and safety."

Watches and jewelry represent some of the most seized products across the nation – 58% of the total value of seized goods in FY2024, representing over \$2 billion in total MSRP value. Handbags and wallets were second, with over \$1 billion in MSRP value seized, or 20% of the total value of seized goods. According to CBP, China continues to be the main source of counterfeit and pirated products that have been seized by the agency. It is the country of origin for approximately 77% of the total value of seizures.

"Stopping this activity is in the hands of consumers," said Rebeca Gonzalez Ramos, the special agent in charge of Homeland Security Investigations in San Juan.