

The Virgin Islands Consortium

CBP Seizes \$4.4 Million In Counterfeit Products In Puerto Rico And USVI

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U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) San Juan Field Operations announced Tuesday the seizure of counterfeit products imported into Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands via international mail or courier before and after the holidays.

According to the release, the estimated manufacturer suggested retail price (MSRP) of all the counterfeit products seized to date is an estimated \$15 million. The actual price of the purchased merchandise is approximately \$4.4 million. There was no distinction in the release as to how many items were confiscated in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

“Purchasing knock-offs of high-end, high-demand products online does have a great impact on the local economy,” said Leida Colon, Assistant Director of Field Operations for Trade. “Unfair and illegal competition dislocates appropriate local business activity, with clear negative effects on local consumers, governments and the potential economic recovery.”

In a 6-day special operation this January, CBP officers intercepted 73 packages with IPR violations valued at an estimated MSRP of \$1. 8 million.

Among the fraudulent merchandise CBP officers seized are watches, jewelry, bags, clothing and sunglasses that were illegally using known brands such as Rolex, Hublot, Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Pandora, Tous and Nike, among many others, the release said.

The manufacture of counterfeit goods raids legitimate businesses of revenue, deprives American workers of jobs, and poses health and safety threats to U.S. consumers, CBP said. In many instances, the proceeds from counterfeit merchandise sales supports other nefarious and illicit businesses.

According to the release, CBP has an aggressive Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) enforcement program, which targets and seizes imports of counterfeit and pirated goods, and enforces exclusion orders on patent-infringing and other IPR goods.

Despite these efforts, the internet has made it easy to find, purchase, and ship items from almost anywhere in the world, CBP said. With a high demand for well-known brands, many online vendors sell counterfeit products online, infringing on various trademark holder's rights and revenues.

CBP has established a public awareness campaign to raise consumer conscientiousness about the consequences and dangers that are often associated with the purchase of counterfeit and pirated goods. For more information visit www.cbp.gov/fakegoodsrealdangers.

If you have any information regarding suspected fraud or illegal trade activity, contact CBP through the [e-Allegations Online Trade Violation Reporting System](#) or by calling 1-800-BE-ALERT. IPR violations can also be reported to the National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center at <https://www.iprcenter.gov/referral/> or by telephone at 1-866-IPR-2060.