



By Don Horne

## STEPPING UP THE FIGHT AGAINST THE SELLING OF COUNTERFEIT PRODUCTS

Counterfeiting causes harm in so many ways.

The counterfeit product is usually not tested to the high standards demanded of the real item, and is more likely to break down or create a hazard.

Counterfeiting undercuts the company producing the real item, diminishing revenues and forcing reductions in staff.

Counterfeits harm the name of the company producing the real items, as the defective counterfeits are unfairly identified with the original equipment manufacturer.

Take Square D, the flagship brand for the Schneider Electric North American Operating Division, which has recently filed suit in U.S. District Court against a nationwide wholesaler of electrical equipment.

Square D's assertion is that the company (whose name we will omit as the case is still pending) knowingly sold counterfeit Square D circuit breakers and infringed the Square D trademarks in violation of federal law.

"In the past 14 months, Square D has filed nine lawsuits to put a stop to the importation, sale and distribution of counterfeit circuit breakers. Nineteen separate defendants have been named in those cases. We have obtained consent orders against many of the defendants requiring product recalls and barring them from importing, selling or distributing counterfeit products and, in some cases, genuine products bearing the Square D trademarks," said Bill Snyder, vice president channel development for the Schneider Electric North American Operating Division. "Square D has every intention of pursuing counterfeiters up and down the distribution chain. We'll stop at nothing to preserve the integrity of our products and protect innocent customers from the serious health and safety hazards associated with counterfeit products. Through this lawsuit and others like it, Square D has demonstrated its ongoing commitment to prevent counterfeiting and protect Square D's customers, trademarks and designs."

Square D takes counterfeiting very



Note that in this photo the real breaker is on the left, identified by the number 15 on the switch lever and shows the red flag for the VisiTrip feature. The counterfeit breaker on the right does not have the 15 on it and the red flag is not visible.

seriously and has devoted a link on its website to the fight against counterfeit perpetrators.

"Distributors need to be aware that there are hidden and potentially deadly hazards associated with counterfeit circuit breakers being distributed on the market today," said Jim Pauley, vice president of industry and government relations for the Schneider Electric North American Operating Division. "By identifying counterfeit products and reporting counterfeiters, distributors can save lives. Accordingly, we urge anyone with information regarding sale or distribution of the counterfeits of our products to contact us immediately."

To prevent the potential purchase of counterfeit products, customers are urged to continue to purchase their Square D products from authorized Square D dis-

tributors.

Square D is a market-leading global brand of Schneider Electric for National Electrical Manufacturing Association (NEMA) type electrical distribution and industrial control products, systems and services. Square D products are found in all types of residential, commercial and industrial construction, in a wide range of manufacturing and processing facilities, and in or on the products of other manufacturers.

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### EDITOR'S NOTE:

For any inquiries related to the lawsuit, to obtain a copy of the lawsuit, or to report the sale or distribution of counterfeits, contact Stephen Litchfield, assistant general counsel, Square D Company, Palatine, Ill., at (847) 925-3516.