

QUALITY CONTROL



In the United Kingdom it is illegal to distill alcohol without first obtaining a licence to do so from HMRC (Her Majesties Revenue & Customs).

In recent years HMRC have seized nearly 15 million liters of illegally produced alcohol and prosecuted the criminal gangs involved in its production and distribution.

During 2011 UK Trading Standards reported a rise in fake alcohol containing potentially dangerous chemicals.

Legitimate alcoholic beverages contain Ethanol, (drinking alcohol) which in moderation can be consumed perfectly safely. In fake or counterfeit alcoholic beverages the ethanol, being very expensive and highly taxed, is substituted for other chemicals which are toxic, including the chemicals used in industrial cleaning fluids, nail polish remover and screen wash. Methanol and Isopropanol are also used (these are more commonly found in anti-freeze) and if consumed can cause permanent blindness.

Fake alcoholic beverages will have a similar effect to legitimate beverages in that they will make the drinker feel 'drunk' but being highly toxic (poisonous) carry serious health risks including; nausea & vomiting, abdominal pain drowsiness & dizziness, kidney & liver problems, permanent blindness, coma and or death.

SPOTTING FAKE ALCOHOL



The majority of consumers will not come into contact with counterfeit alcohol, but the UK Trading Standards Institute encourage consumers to be vigilant when buying alcohol and to be able to spot counterfeit products using the '4P's' guidelines shown here.

PRODUCT

Almost any type of alcohol can be faked. Counterfeiters will even try to fake well known brands. Obscure and unheard of brands should be treated with caution. Of all the spirits, Vodka is the most commonly faked as it is a clear liquid with little odor. Legitimate Vodka should be crystal clear without tiny white particles floating in it. If this sediment is present in a bottle of Vodka it is likely to have been diluted with tap water.

Alcoholic beverages as a rule should not smell bad. Those that do - particularly if there is a strong smell of nail varnish present - should under no circumstances be consumed. Anyone who recognizes fake alcohol should report it to trading standards immediately.

PLACE



Most alcohol retailers run completely legitimate businesses and would not involve themselves with fake alcohol so it is advisable to always purchase alcohol from reputable, fully licensed supermarkets, off licences, or shops.

PRICE



**3 BOTTLES
PREMIUM
VODKA
ONLY
£10.00!!!**

Genuine alcoholic beverages, particularly those with an ABV (Alcohol by Volume) of 30% or above are subject to high levels of duty and tax and as a result are quite expensive. Therefore if an offer looks too good to be true - it usually is! The alcohol on offer may not be fake but is still highly likely to be illegally produced.

PACKAGING



DUTY PAID STICKER
In the UK spirits with an ABV (Alcohol by Volume) of over 30% in bottles of 350ml or over by law must display the official HMRC Duty Paid sticker. A

legitimate label should be fluorescent, or glow green, under an ultraviolet light. It is usually incorporated as part of the labelling. If it is not present, it is a fake - if it is there but doesn't look right and or doesn't fluoresce, it is a fake.



LABELLING

Legitimate manufacturers of alcoholic beverages go to great lengths to ensure that their products are labelled correctly and in accordance with industry standards and regulations. Poor quality printing, spelling mistakes and misaligned labelling can indicate a counterfeit product.



SECURITY SEAL

In the UK all alcoholic beverages are sold with the bottle cap security sealed. Any alcoholic beverage purchased which appears to have had its seal broken should not be consumed. It may not necessarily be fake but it may have been tampered with.



FAKE BAR CODES

Some counterfeiters use fake bar codes to make the product look more realistic. There are mobile phone apps available which will scan and identify the product.