

Empowering Small Businesses to Secure and Enforce Their IPR

The Department of Commerce has undertaken numerous activities to assist small-and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in protecting and enforcing intellectual property rights (IPR), both in the United States and abroad.

www.STOPfakes.gov and STOP Hotline: The Department of Commerce launched a website to provide updates and links to IPR programs. The site allows businesses to file complaints about IPR-related trade problems, which are answered within ten days by a trade specialist from the Office of Intellectual Property Rights. The Department of Commerce also established the 1-866-999-HALT hotline answered by U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) IPR experts, who work with the Office of Intellectual Property Rights to help businesses secure and enforce their IPR through international treaties.

Country IPR Toolkits: The Department of Commerce assisted in the development of country toolkits – posted on U.S. Embassy websites and accessible via www.STOPfakes.gov. Toolkits contain detailed information on protecting IPR in Brazil, Brunei, China, Croatia, Egypt, European Union, Ghana, India, Italy, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Russia, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam. The Department of Commerce is working to expand the program to include toolkits for other trading partners.

The Transatlantic Intellectual Property Rights Portal: The Department of Commerce, International Trade Administration and the European Commission's Directorate General (DG) for Enterprise and Industry developed the Transatlantic IPR Resource Portal to make it easier for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to find and use the resources that both governments have developed to help businesses protect and enforce intellectual property rights. The Portal is accessible via www.STOPfakes.gov.

Protecting IPR at Trade Fairs: The Department of Commerce developed a program to promote IPR protection at domestic and international trade fairs. The Department of Commerce is educating trade fair attendees, exhibitors, and organizers about the value of IPR, raising awareness of IPR issues at trade fairs, and promoting IPR protection at trade fairs and pavilions that the Department of Commerce operates, certifies, or supports.

Securing the Supply Chain: In 2009, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce released the Intellectual Property Protection and Enforcement Manual, an evolution from the Coalition Against Counterfeiting and Piracy's (CACP) 2006 No Trade in Fakes Supply Chain Tool Kit. The manual offers practical advice on how brand owners can protect their intellectual property through careful and proactive brand management. This document is posted at www.theCACP.com. The Department of Commerce's Office of Intellectual Property Rights is working with the CACP to encourage our trading partners to develop similar guidelines for foreign markets.

International IPR Advisory Program: The Department of Commerce established with the American Bar Association a program through which American small-and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) can request a free, one-hour consultation with a volunteer attorney knowledgeable in both IPR issues and particular country laws and practices to learn how to protect and enforce their trademarks, patents, or copyrights, in that country. Expertise is now available for Angola, Argentina, Brazil, China, Colombia, Egypt, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, Mozambique, Nigeria, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, and Vietnam. Learn more about the Program at www.STOPfakes.gov. Additional countries to be added in 2011.

Online IPR Training Module: The Department of Commerce's Office of Intellectual Property Rights worked with the USPTO, the Small Business Administration, and the Foreign Commercial Service to develop an online training program for SMEs to learn how to evaluate, protect, and enforce their IPR. The program is available free online at www.STOPfakes.gov in English, Spanish, and French. DVD copies are available upon request.

Outreach and Seminars: The Department of Commerce's Office of Intellectual Property Rights and the USPTO regularly conduct outreach and training events about how companies can protect and enforce intellectual property rights in the U.S. and overseas. Outreach events are conducted in-person and via webinar.

Working With Our Trade Partners: The Department of Commerce is sharing SME resources and introducing IPR initiatives with our partners in multilateral organizations, such as the G-8, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (the OECD) and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum. We have also developed partnerships with the European Union, France, and Japan to share resources on IPR enforcement cooperation and combating global IPR theft. For more information, please visit www.STOPfakes.gov.