

# Anti-Counterfeit Guide for Corporate Customers



HP Anti Counterfeiting and Fraud (ACF) Programme for Europe, the Middle East, and Africa (EMEA)

April 2021



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Counterfeit cartridges and computing products can pose considerable risks to enterprises and public institutions. Make use of the following helpful tips to protect your organisation from fraudsters and their illegal scheming.

## Fake products and risks of counterfeiting

Counterfeiters are trying to illicitly exploit the good reputation of original HP products by designing their illegal fakes in a way that confuses customers into believing that they are buying genuine HP goods. Often, fraudsters might specifically target corporations and large public-sector customers such as government organisations and universities with such criminal activities.

While counterfeits may look like genuine HP products, they are illegal and usually of low quality. Using them can entail significant risks, such as the following:



### Mind the possible risks of counterfeit products



Poor printouts that taint your organisation's image



Printer downtimes and interruption of workflows



Complaints towards your purchase or IT departments



Invalid HP warranty and extended service costs to repair damaged printers



Wasted money and need for a new tendering process



Severe health and safety risks, e.g. due to hazardous wiring in fake computing products



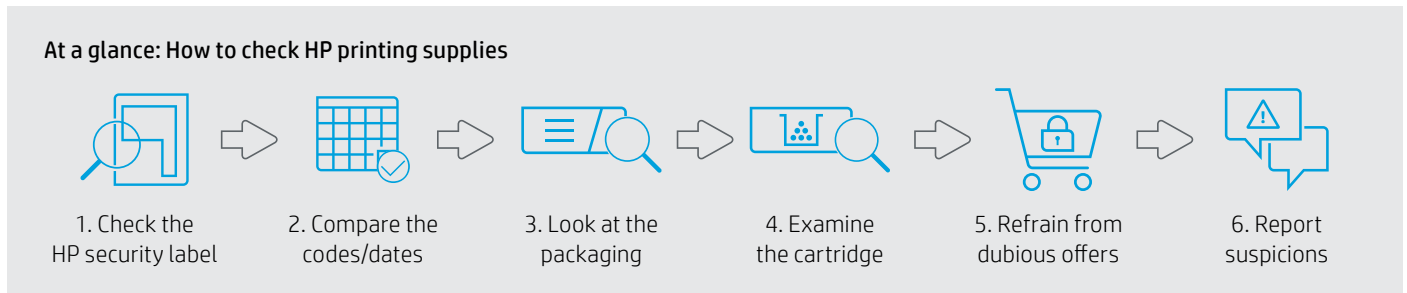
Cyber security risks, as the chip on a fake cartridge could be used to inject malware



Unwitting dealings with criminals

## Avoiding fake cartridges

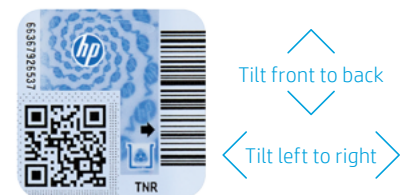
Original HP printing supplies, including HP branded and Samsung branded cartridges, are particularly at risk of being counterfeited.<sup>1</sup> Please carefully follow the steps below for examining suspicious products.



### 1. Check the HP security label

The security label exhibits the correct holographic features

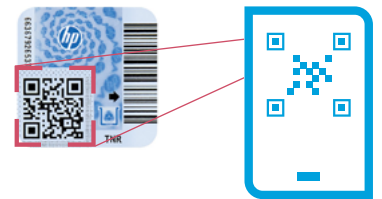
- > Tilt the box front to back: the 'hp' and '✓' symbols on the label should move in opposite directions.
- > Tilt the box right to left: the 'hp' and '✓' symbols on the label should move in the same direction.



Specifically for customers: Validate the label's unique code via smartphone

- > Capture the Quick Response (QR) code on the label with a QR code reader to get a direct response from HP.

Current HP toner security labels feature a barcode. The barcode supports the serialisation of HP toner cartridges and cannot help you determine if a product might be counterfeit.



Security labels are present and applied correctly

Check that all products that are supposed to carry a security label actually do carry one – and that the label is in the correct location, as indicated in the graphics below.

Hover your mouse over the security labels below and the marked areas on the ink/toner boxes for close-ups!

- > **All HP toner cartridges should have a label.** This includes regular HP toner cartridges as well as HP's SBD<sup>2</sup>/MPS<sup>3</sup> toner cartridges and HP Neverstop kits. The label is generally stuck across the tear strip of the box. If you notice any such products without an HP security label, you have reason to be suspicious.



- > **Select HP ink cartridges carry a label** in HP's European and ISE markets (i.e. Africa, Europe, and the Middle East). Check a product against our [security label overview for HP ink cartridges](#): You have reason to be suspicious if a security label is missing when it should be present. Note that all HP GT Ink Bottles for HP's ink tank printers generally come with a security label, too.



Also make sure that the security label corresponds with the product – for example, an ink label on a toner cartridge is suspicious, and vice versa.



- > **HP PageWide cartridges and HP large format cartridges generally carry a security label.** The HP security label used on these products is of the same design as the one applied to ink cartridges.



- > **Select HP Long Life Consumables (LLCs) come with an LLC security label,** e.g. fusers and Image Transfer Kits. If present, the label features the dedicated 'LLC' icon.



Get more details on how to check HP Long Life Consumables (LLCs), such as fusers and Image Transfer Kits, and Samsung branded toner cartridges in our respective one-sheet guides.

### Be aware of different variations of the security label

Some older versions of HP's security labels may still be in circulation; they generally have an image-shifting feature that can be checked similarly to the method described above.

#### Current security labels



#### Previous security labels



## 2. Compare the codes/dates

### Codes/dates on box and cartridge match

Original HP cartridges feature specific codes or dates on the box as well as on the cartridge it contains. If codes/dates do not match as described below, you have reason to be suspicious.

- > **Toner:** All original HP toner cartridges have a code on both the box and the cartridge itself, of which at least the first five characters match. Please ignore all further specifications present.
- > **Ink, GT Ink Bottles, PageWide, large format:** These HP cartridges feature the same 'End of Warranty' date on the box as on the cartridge itself (+/- 1 month).



## 3. Look at the packaging

### All products are delivered in original HP packaging

- > HP generally recommends only accepting HP cartridges in unopened original HP packaging. HP's packaging offers important protection against counterfeiting and can contain essential product information.
- > If you accept cartridges without their HP packaging, this might expose you to an increased risk of counterfeiting. In addition, sellers providing cartridges without their HP packaging might violate local product safety/customer protection laws if relevant information was included on the HP packaging.

### All packaging is of consistent quality

- > Boxes and packaging materials used for original HP cartridges are of consistent and premium quality.
- > There should be no spelling or printing mistakes, no signs of wear and tear, and no indicators that the box may have been opened and re-sealed.



Please note that HP also offers supplies SKUs for (1) Supplies Big Deals (SBD), the so-called C-SKUs<sup>2</sup>, and for (2) Managed Print Services (MPS), the so-called Managed SKUs or M-SKUs<sup>3</sup>. These products can be recognised easily due to their comparatively plain white or brown boxes, respectively. Note that these products are intended to be sold to end customers by HP Authorised Partners only, i.e. (1) C-SKUs by accredited SBD Resellers and (2) M-SKUs by accredited Power Service Partners. However, HP cannot rule out that C-SKUs and M-SKUs are traded by non-authorised vendors and may be a disguise for counterfeit products.



### 4. Examine the cartridge

#### The cartridge itself has to look clean and brand new

- > Original HP cartridges are always delivered unused.
- > There should be no damage, ink or toner leakage, scratches, or any signs of previous use on the cartridge itself.



### 5. Refrain from dubious offers

#### HP sells products through contracted channel partners

- > To avoid counterfeit cartridges, HP recommends to only buy from trustworthy vendors, such as e.g. HP Authorised Partners.

#### HP sales practices are consistent and reliable

- > If an offer sounds 'too good to be true', it probably is. HP thus advises to refrain from any suspicious offers, including sales practices such as:
  - X Printing supplies offered at suspiciously low prices.
  - X Insistence on placing orders immediately or insistence on 'cash-on-delivery' shipment.
  - X Allegedly 'new' or 'enhanced' products offered exclusively by the salesperson's company.
  - X Bulk sales of allegedly original HP cartridges on online auction sites.
  - X Unsolicited email offers (spam) or online offers with incomplete vendor contact information.
- > HP recommends avoiding offers for alleged 'grey market' or 'parallel imported' printing supplies<sup>4</sup>, which could be used as a pretext for selling counterfeit goods. Note that in the European Economic Area, Switzerland, and United Kingdom, grey marketing constitutes a trademark infringement.



#### Beware of attempts to gather packaging material for illegal re-use

Fraudsters sometimes try to get hold of used HP cartridge boxes or security labels, to illegally re-use them to disguise counterfeit cartridges. Please refrain from such schemes and report immediately to HP if you notice practices such as:

- ! Requests to open HP cartridge boxes without damaging the security label
- ! Offers to buy back or take back empty cartridge boxes
- ! Offers to buy back or take back removed HP security labels

When opening a cartridge box, please always use the tear strip or designated opening, which you can generally find close to the security label (if present) – this helps to prevent that boxes and security labels are illegally re-used.

Please also stay vigilant towards unsolicited, dubious offers to collect and allegedly recycle used cartridges. If your organisation wants to recycle used cartridges for the environment, you are welcome to use [HP's Planet Partners service](#), available in numerous countries worldwide.

### 6. Report suspicions

#### Act when suspicious about a product or offer

- > Please report to HP's anti-counterfeiting experts as described below if you have any counterfeiting suspicions. Our experts are glad to help if you think that a product might be counterfeit or if you e.g. notice dubious offers or shady bids in tenders.

## Avoiding fake computing products

Computing products that are notably at risk of being counterfeited include, among others, laptop power adapters and batteries, USB flash drives, keyboards and mice, as well as memory cards. However, a wide range of other accessories or even entire PCs and laptops might also be subject to counterfeiting. To avoid illicit computing goods, please follow the steps outlined below.

### At a glance: How to check HP computing products



1. Look at the packaging



2. Check the products



3. Refrain from dubious offers



4. Report suspicions



### 1. Look at the packaging

#### HP uses premium packaging

- > Genuine HP products are shipped in high-quality, new HP branded boxes or blister packs.
- > There should be no blurry text and images, incorrect HP logos, product photos that differ from the actual item, or spelling mistakes.



### 2. Check the products

#### Genuine HP computing products are of high quality

- > Original HP products are always manufactured according to HP's strict quality standards. They generally bear distinct HP logos as well as a sticker that displays the product information in high-resolution print.
- > Goods that show signs of damage, scratches, or wear and tear could potentially be fake. Also, any product sticker stuck on haphazardly or featuring spelling or punctuation errors should be cause for doubt, as should incorrect HP logo labels.



### 3. Refrain from dubious offers

#### HP sells products through contracted channel partners

- > To avoid counterfeit computing products, HP recommends to only buy from trustworthy vendors, such as e.g. HP Authorised Partners.

#### HP sales practices are consistent and reliable

- > If an offer sounds 'too good to be true', it probably is. HP thus advises to refrain from any suspicious offers, including sales practices such as:
  - X Computing goods offered at suspiciously low prices.
  - X Sales of allegedly original HP products featuring descriptions like 'factory tested/factory testing', 'bulk packaging', 'new retail', 'factory-sealed retail packaging' or 'grade A cell'.
  - X Offers with photos showing mass manufacturing or packaging processes, or showing internal components.
  - X Sellers claiming to be a manufacturer associated with or endorsed by HP or allegedly offering 'equal quality and lower prices than standard HP products'.
  - X Bulk sales of allegedly original HP products on online auction sites.
  - X Unsolicited email offers (spam) or online offers with incomplete vendor contact information.
- > HP recommends avoiding offers for alleged 'grey market' or 'parallel imported' products<sup>4</sup>, which could be used as a pretext for selling counterfeit goods. Note that in the European Economic Area, Switzerland, and United Kingdom, grey marketing constitutes a trademark infringement.



### 4. Report suspicions

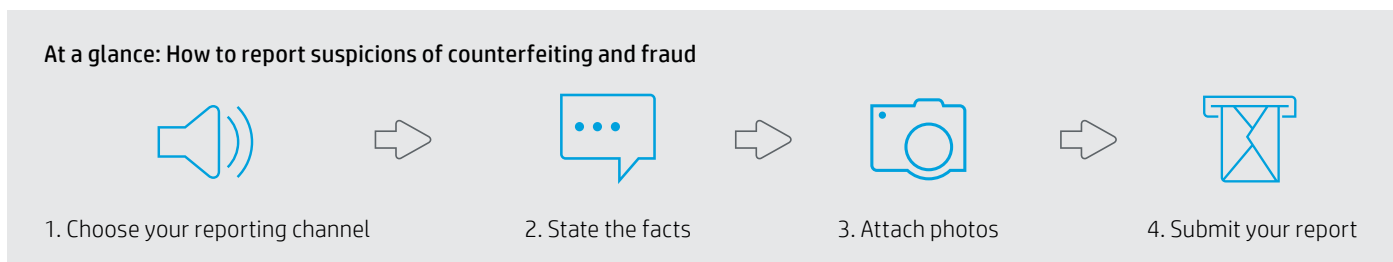
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- > Please report to HP's anti-counterfeiting experts as described below if you have any counterfeiting suspicions. Our experts are glad to help if you think that a product might be counterfeit or if you e.g. notice dubious offers or shady bids in tenders.



## Reporting possible counterfeits

If you have checked the products as outlined above and your suspicions have become concrete, please report immediately to HP.



### What to keep in mind before reporting to HP


- > Please keep the suspicious product, its packaging, and any related documents such as invoices for further reference.
- > For your own safety, HP generally recommends not telling the vendor that sold the dubious goods about your suspicion.

HP is committed to protecting your privacy (see the [HP Online Privacy Statement](#)). We will use the information you report to act against counterfeiting, as and if appropriate. We may also contact you about your report, e.g. for follow-up questions. Reporting is voluntary and can be done without providing any personal information. All the information you provide to us will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law and will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.

### 1. Choose your reporting channel


Directly turn to HP’s experts in case of suspicions:

**Contact HP’s ACF team in any language**



**Email**

Write to [emea.anti-counterfeit@hp.com](mailto:emea.anti-counterfeit@hp.com).



**Web**

Visit [hp.com/go/anticounterfeit](http://hp.com/go/anticounterfeit) and click on ‘Report counterfeit’ – you can even report anonymously.



### 2. State the facts

This is what we need to know in order to effectively follow up on your suspicion:

- > Explain the reason(s) for your suspicion (e.g. suspiciously low price, dubious packaging).<sup>1</sup>
- > Provide the name and contact details of the vendor, if available.
- > Please indicate your contact details for potential follow-up questions – of course, you can also report anonymously, e.g. via the web.

### 3. Attach photos

Please follow these guidelines for providing pictures to HP’s ACF experts:


- > Include sharp digital photos of **all six sides of the product’s packaging** such that we can view the smaller text. Please also include a sharp, legible **close-up of the security label** (if present) and a picture of the product itself, if possible.
- > If possible, please use daylight or a well-lit room, and refrain from using your camera’s flash.



Example photos for reporting a suspicious toner cartridge

### 4. Submit your report

Send your information to our ACF experts, who will review your report and take appropriate follow-up action. Potential actions can include related inquiries, assisting enforcement authorities during raid actions, or e.g. raising civil and criminal cases, if/as appropriate.



**Be sure to avoid potential fakes – request a free Customer Delivery Inspection (CDI)**

If you are suspicious about a large or mid-sized cartridge delivery or notice dubious tender bids, you can easily request a free [Customer Delivery Inspection \(CDI\)](#). If granted, an HP ACF expert will then check your delivered products for counterfeiting and fraud.

## Protecting your organisation

Get active to shield your organisation from fraudsters! HP offers a wealth of handy, ready-to-use information material that can help you steer clear of counterfeit products. Click on the links below, access selected ACF resources, and purchase safely.



### Protect your future purchases



#### ACF Buying Guide

Stay vigilant and keep your next HP purchase secure with the hands-on tips in this one-sheet guide



#### ACF Tender Tips

Use our brief checklist when issuing tenders and/or a request for proposal (RFP) to safely purchase originals



#### Short ACF video clips

Inform yourself about central ACF topics in just a few minutes with spot-on clips and video tutorials



### Get HP's ACF support and avoid illicit dealings



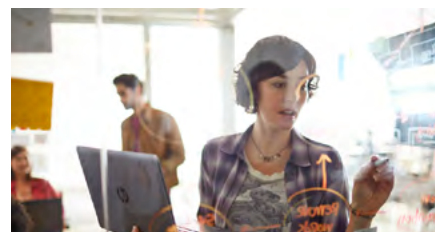
#### CDI User Guide

Learn how HP's free Customer Delivery Inspections (CDIs) work and easily request a free check



#### ACF Case Study

See how a public-sector customer uses HP's help to avert sourcing fake printing supplies



#### ACF pages on hp.com

Visit the anti-counterfeit pages on hp.com for further details, handy downloads, and to contact us



## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

- ?** **Is counterfeiting really an issue in my country/region? What is HP doing against counterfeiting?**
- Counterfeiting is illegal and a worldwide threat. HP's experiences of counterfeiting in Africa, Europe, and the Middle East show that fake products may be found on markets virtually anywhere. HP aims to shield customers from risky counterfeit products and runs its dedicated Anti Counterfeiting and Fraud (ACF) Programme. Our actions focus on ensuring safe purchases at HP's partners with ACF Channel Partner Protection Audits (CPPAs), identifying illicit deliveries at customers with ACF Customer Delivery Inspections (CDIs), providing useful ACF information material, and supporting local officials such as police in enforcement actions against fraudsters.
- ?** **Are there really any notable risks associated with counterfeiting?**
- Absolutely – for customers, using counterfeit printing supplies can entail significant risks. These can include interruption of workflows, damaged printers, and related service costs. Other risks include sub-standard printouts, which can undermine trust in your organisation, unwitting dealings with criminals and thus support of their activities, and even serious hazards to health and safety, for example due to unsafe wiring in fake IT products.
- ?** **What can I do to protect my organisation from counterfeiting?**
- Generally, HP recommends only buying from trusted traders, such as HP reseller partners, and avoiding any offers that seem 'too good to be true', for example including prices substantially below market averages or other suspicious characteristics. Hands-on details on how to purchase safely are included in our [ACF Buying Guide](#) and [ACF Tender Tips](#). In addition, please stay up to date on how to avoid counterfeit products and check the products you receive according to the [steps detailed above](#). If you suspect that you have received potential counterfeits in a mid-size or large HP printing supplies shipment, simply [request a free Customer Delivery Inspection \(CDI\)](#) from HP, during which an HP ACF product expert will check the suspicious items at your discretion.
- ?** **How does HP ensure that HP partners' stocks are free from fakes?**
- To ensure that you can purchase at HP partners with peace of mind, HP carries out dedicated Channel Partner Protection Audits (CPPAs). During these unannounced audits, specially trained HP ACF auditors visit our partners' premises to check their stocks of HP printing supplies for counterfeit and improperly traded products. This helps to make sure that customers can trust in HP partners to provide them with high-quality, genuine HP products.
- ?** **What exactly are counterfeit products?**
- Counterfeiting is the unauthorised use of a trademark on goods that do not originate from or were not made under licence of the brand owner. Fake goods are designed to imitate the original products, with the intention of deceiving customers into believing they are buying genuine items. Counterfeiting is illegal.
- ?** **What is the difference between counterfeiting and grey marketing?**
- In contrast to counterfeit goods, grey market products or parallel imports<sup>4</sup> generally denote genuine, brand-name products that are sold in a territory they were not intended for by the brand holder, without the brand holder's consent. Grey marketing constitutes a trademark infringement in the European Economic Area, Switzerland, and United Kingdom. In addition, grey marketing might be used as a pretext by fraudsters to sell risky counterfeit products.



**?** **And what is misrepresentation?**  
Misrepresentation refers to deals that may mislead customers into thinking they are purchasing an original HP product while this is not the case. Misleading offers may involve misuse of HP's IP, such as our trademark or imagery, and can often affect online and tele sales.

**?** **Are counterfeit and 'refilled'/'remanufactured'/'imitation' cartridges the same?**  
Please do not confuse counterfeits with 'refilled', 'remanufactured', or 'newly built compatible' cartridges (often called 'imitations', referring to newly built cartridges that may infringe patents used in original printing supplies products). Note that 'refilled', 'remanufactured', or 'newly built compatible' cartridges can be sold legally, as long as they do not infringe HP patents and/or bear HP's trademarks. However, it is illegal to package or sell such products in a way that confuses or potentially confuses customers into believing that they are buying (A) a brand-new genuine HP product; or (B) a product that is associated with or endorsed by but not manufactured by HP. In addition, it is generally illegal if a product is using HP's intellectual property without HP's consent.

<sup>1</sup> For printing supplies, please note that 'refilled', 'remanufactured', 'imitation' or 'compatible' cartridges are legitimate, as long as they do not infringe HP's or other third-party intellectual property rights. However, it is illegal to package or sell such products in a way that confuses or potentially confuses customers into believing that they are buying a brand-new genuine HP product, or a product that is associated with or endorsed by but not manufactured by HP, or in the event that a product is using HP's intellectual property without HP's consent. | <sup>2</sup> C-SKUs include selected supplies product numbers of PLs 5T, IU, and LS, i.e. products ending in "AC", "XC", or "YC". | <sup>3</sup> Managed SKUs include selected supplies product numbers of PLs 5T, IU, GL, GM, HF, and K6, i.e. (i) PLs 5T, IU, GL: products ending in "MC"; (ii) PL K6: products ending in "YC"; (iii) PL GM products ending in "AC" or "XC"; and (iv) PL HF supplies compatible with managed printers (PLs MC, G8, GQ). | <sup>4</sup> Grey market goods or parallel imports generally denote genuine, brand-name products that are sourced from one territory (country / economic area) and imported into another territory without the brand holder's consent (source: International Trademark Association INTA). For clarity, cross-border sales of legitimate HP products within the European Economic Area (European Union + Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway), Switzerland, and the United Kingdom (UK) are not considered grey marketing (status: Oct. 2020).

Learn more at  
[hp.com/go/anticounterfeit](https://hp.com/go/anticounterfeit)

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EMEA = Europe, the Middle East, and Africa

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