

Code of Ethics for companies joining the “No Fakes Pledge” Scheme tightened up

The Intellectual Property Department (IPD) initiated a meeting with the issuing and supporting organisations under the “No Fakes Pledge” Scheme (the Scheme) today (September 30) to discuss, among other things, ways to tighten up the Code of Ethics for companies joining the Scheme.

The meeting was chaired by the Acting Director of Intellectual Property, Mr Peter Cheung and concluded that additional provisions should be introduced to the Code of Ethics with immediate effect so as to bolster the confidence of consumers, including tourists, in the Scheme.

The additional provisions will apply to new entrants to the Scheme with immediate effect and progressively to all existing participants. The revised Code will allow issuing bodies of the Scheme and IPD to suspend or terminate a member company’s membership under the Scheme if they have reason to believe that such member company has failed to comply with the revised Code or if there is any action taken against it by the Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department (C&ED). Where the membership of a member company is suspended or terminated, the member company shall immediately return the “No Fakes” sticker and tent card to the issuing body concerned or IPD. In addition, the issuing body concerned and IPD shall have the right to publicise any action taken against the member company concerned.

Speaking at the meeting, Mr Cheung noted that IPD, C&ED and all issuing and supporting organisations are committed to the promotion of the Scheme and maintaining its integrity.

“There are more than 4,300 retail outlets participating in the Scheme. Recently one of the member companies under the Scheme is being suspected of selling counterfeit jewelries. It is

an individual case. Yet, we have reviewed the operation of the Scheme and enhanced the Code of Ethics. The updated version of the Code of Ethics would help to bolster consumer confidence in the Scheme,” he said.

Mr Cheung also put forward a strong message in the meeting that shops that were involved in selling or other dealing in of counterfeit and pirated goods would be criminally prosecuted.

Mr YK Tam, Senior Superintendent of C&ED said that Customs had a high regard for its role in the Scheme. “C&ED fully supports the Scheme and has been working closely with the copyright and trademark owners of the Intellectual Property Rights Protection Alliance in conducting shop visits. Swift action will be taken against those shops where counterfeit and pirated goods are sold.”

Mr Tam reiterated that Customs has all along been maintaining close market surveillance against suspected counterfeiting and piracy activities under its effective partnership with copyright and trademark owners, trade organisations and relevant Government departments.

IPD, together with the Hong Kong Record Merchants Association, the Hong Kong Retail Management Association and the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce, launched the Scheme in 1998 to encourage retail traders not to deal in counterfeit and pirated goods so as to strengthen the confidence of consumers in shopping in Hong Kong.

Other supporting organisations include the Hong Kong Tourism Board, the Hong Kong & Kowloon Electrical Appliances Merchants Association Ltd., the Hong Kong General Chamber of Pharmacy Ltd., the Chamber of Hong Kong Computer Industry and the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong. At present, more than 640 companies with over 4,300 retail outlets

have joined the Scheme. Participating retail outlets have to display the "No Fakes" stickers for identification.

Periodical meetings will be arranged among the issuing and supporting organisations under the Scheme in order to ensure the smooth operation of the Scheme.

Details of the Scheme and the updated Code of Ethics are available at No Fakes Pledge's web site at www.nofakes.hk

Ends/Friday, September 30, 2005