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### [CBP.gov/Careers](http://CBP.gov/Careers)



## Letter from the Assistant Commissioner: Protecting Consumers

I'm Pete Ladowicz, assistant commissioner for CBP's Office of Congressional Affairs. With the holiday shopping season in full swing, we want to highlight CBP's efforts to protect the American consumer from counterfeit, unsafe, and fraudulently entered goods. We trust that the medicine we buy won't make us sick, that the electronics we buy won't suddenly catch fire, and that the name brand on our clothes is authentic. That's why import safety and intellectual property rights are two of CBP's Priority Trade Issues, or PTIs. PTIs represent high-risk areas that can cause significant revenue loss, harm the U.S. economy, or threaten the health and safety of the American people. Whether it's detecting counterfeit goods, stopping pests from infiltrating our ecosystem, preventing goods made of dangerous materials from entering American homes, or finding drugs hidden in everyday items, the men and women of CBP are hard at work this holiday—and every day—protecting consumers and facilitating legitimate trade. From all of us at the Office of Congressional Affairs, we wish you and your families a safe and happy holiday season.

## Fake Goods, Real Dangers: The Truth Behind Counterfeits

The dangers of buying counterfeit products aren't always obvious. There are economic impacts, legal implications, and health and safety risks that are important for you to know before you buy.



### Economic Impacts

Each year, CBP seizes all kinds of counterfeit products from all over the world. Counterfeiters look to make profits by making fake versions of the hottest products as soon as they are available on the market. Each time you buy a counterfeit good, a legitimate company loses money. This translates to lost profits and U.S. jobs over time. Know who you buy from.

### Health and Safety

Counterfeiters don't care about your well-being. They just want to make a profit. Many counterfeit products are low-quality and can cause injuries. Last year, CBP seized more items that pose health and safety risks than ever before. Protect yourself and your family by avoiding potentially risk items.

### Legal Implications

It is illegal to purchase counterfeit goods. Bringing them into the United States may result in civil or criminal penalties. Purchasing counterfeit goods supports criminal activities such as money laundering and trafficking in illegal guns and drugs. Remember: If it seems like a steal, it is.

### E-Commerce

E-commerce is a growing segment of the U.S. economy and has been increasing significantly for the past several years. Consumer habits are changing as the internet allows individuals to make purchases online. These advances in economic activity have led to increasing volumes of imports of small, just-in-time packages, creating inspection challenges for CBP.

E-commerce shipments pose the same health, safety, and economic security risks as containerized shipments, but the volume is higher and continues to grow. Also, transnational criminal organizations are shipping illicit goods to the United States via small packages due to a perceived lower interdiction risk and less severe consequences if the package is interdicted.

For more information, visit [CBP.gov](http://CBP.gov) or contact the Office of Congressional Affairs.

### TOP HEALTH & SAFETY PRODUCTS SEIZED



The Office of Congressional Affairs (OCA) serves as the single point of contact within CBP for communications between CBP and Congress.

OCA is committed to addressing any question or concern you may have related to CBP's complex mission. Please contact us:

Phone: (202) 344-1760; Fax: (202) 344-2152; E-mail: [OCAInquiry@cbp.dhs.gov](mailto:OCAInquiry@cbp.dhs.gov).

Please visit CBP's [Congressional Resources](#) webpage for frequently asked questions, news and events, and other CBP resources.



## CBP Officers Seize Unsafe Mattress Shipment in Tacoma

In August, CBP Office of Field Operations officers at the Port of Tacoma seized a shipment of more than 300 potentially unsafe mattresses worth more than \$50,000. The merchandise was seized due to consumer safety concerns about the flammability of the fabric.

“CBP is focused on identifying and intercepting imported consumer products that do not meet our country’s consumer product safety standards. The enforcement of U.S. consumer safety laws at our ports of entry is, and will continue to be, a high-priority,” said Mark Wilkerson, director of CBP’s Area Port of Seattle. “The importation of unsafe consumer products threatens the well-being of the American people and can damage the economy of the United States.”

With the growth of foreign trade, unscrupulous companies have made billions of dollars from selling unsafe pirated goods and merchandise. To combat the illicit trade of merchandise violating laws relating to intellectual property rights, trademark and copyright holders may register with CBP through an online system. This registration assists CBP officers and import specialists in identifying illegal merchandise. Learn more at [CBP.gov](http://CBP.gov) or contact the Office of Congressional Affairs.

## CBP Prevents Smuggling of Nearly 900 Pounds of Invasive Mitten Crabs

In October, CBP agriculture specialists discovered hundreds of pounds of invasive Chinese mitten crabs while conducting a routine inspection at a Cincinnati express consignment facility. Specialists noted X-ray anomalies in sixteen separate shipments arriving from China labeled as clothing. Inside the boxes were thousands of live crustaceans, all destined for residences in New York.

In Asia, mitten crabs are considered a seasonal delicacy; however, their disastrous impact on other global habitats has earned them a place on the Invasive Species Special Group’s list of “[100 of the World’s Worst Invasive Alien Species.](#)”

Per U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regulations, the shipments were refused entry into the United States. Learn more at [CBP.gov](http://CBP.gov) or contact the Office of Congressional Affairs.



## CBP and Cisco Collaborate to Facilitate the Authentication of Cisco Shipments Entering U.S.

In November, CBP announced a new formal collaboration with Cisco as part of the [Donations Acceptance Program](#). Under its partnership with CBP, Cisco is donating barcode scanner devices and providing secured access to purpose-built tooling so that CBP officers and import specialists may quickly scan and verify the authenticity of Cisco merchandise entering the United States.



CBP and Cisco have deployed these tools to a limited number of international mail and express consignment facilities to confirm they work and address technical issues, if any, before using them on a larger scale. One such facility used the donated scanner/tooling suite during a special operation in August to seize 147 counterfeit Cisco-branded products, with a total MSRP of \$958,375. CBP and Cisco are currently exploring additional locations for further deployment.

The Donations Acceptance Program broadly enables CBP to accept donations of real property, personal property (including monetary donations), and non-personal services from public and private sector entities in support of CBP operations. Accepted donations may be used for port of entry construction, alterations, operations, and maintenance activities.

Learn more at [CBP.gov](http://CBP.gov) or contact the Office of Congressional Affairs.

## Cincinnati CBP Finds Liquid Heroin in Shampoo Bottles

In October, Cincinnati CBP officers intercepted a shipment containing nearly six pounds of liquid heroin at a local express consignment facility. The shipment originated in Morelos, Mexico, and was destined for a private residence in Bronx, New York. After opening the package, which was manifested as “massage oil,” officers discovered six shampoo bottles containing a dark brown liquid, which tested positive for heroin.



The same day, officers found four shipments of cocaine, each weighing over four pounds, arriving from Central American countries and destined for individuals in West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New York.

## CBP Officers Seize Wall Chargers with Counterfeit UL Markings

In September, CBP officers at the the Port of New York/Newark made a shocking discovery: counterfeit wall chargers that could cause grave damage to holiday shoppers, their families, and their homes.



CBP officers selected these shipments for inspection for possible intellectual property rights violations. Specialists from CBP’s electronics Center of Excellence and Expertise determined that 150,000 wall chargers, filling 1,500 cartons, bore counterfeit UL markings in violation of 19 U.S.C. 1526(e).

The total manufacturer’s suggested retail price of the seized wall chargers, if they were genuine, was estimated to be more than \$2.7 million. Learn more at [CBP.gov](http://CBP.gov) or contact the Office of Congressional Affairs.