

AUTOMOTIVE

## Mercedes-Benz strikes back against car counterfeiters

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*Counterfeit vehicle parts often suffer from poor quality that do not meet necessary legal standards for drivers' safety. Image credit: Mercedes-Benz*

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

German automaker Mercedes-Benz is reporting an increase in the availability of inauthentic parts for its vehicles.

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In 2022, 155,000 counterfeit products listings were removed from various online platforms, rising by a record rate of more than 23 percent over the previous year. Imitations of the manufacturer's high-quality parts are known to be dangerous for those on the road, leading the company to strike back by working with law enforcement and customs agents to combat fakes.

"Organized gangs of counterfeiters usually have their low-quality and often dangerous goods produced under inhumane conditions without regard for human rights, environmental standards and occupational health and safety," said Renata Jungo Brnnger, member of the board of management for integrity, governance & sustainability at [Mercedes-Benz Group AG](#), in a statement.

"We are taking massive action against this," Ms. Brnnger said. "This is because they harm not only consumers, but also local workers and society as a whole.

"Counterfeiters are very active and are constantly expanding their portfolio."

Consumer protection

Mock vehicle parts, according to Mercedes-Benz, often suffer from poor quality that would not meet necessary legal standards for drivers' safety.

Throughout last year, 1.6 million phony products were seized via 620 separate police raids.

Typically visually indistinguishable from the real deal, inauthentic parts usually include brake discs, wheels, auto body replacements and steering pieces, but other portions of the vehicle are expected to be targeted as crackdowns continue.



*The vehicle positioned at the top utilized phony parts, leading it to fail a brake test. Image credit: Mercedes-Benz*

To counteract this, Mercedes-Benz's internal brand protection team is working behind the scenes to detect, attack and prevent these imitators from affecting unsuspecting consumers online.

The automaker suggests a careful analysis of product images before purchasing, keeping a lookout for suspiciously low prices and staying away from dubious sales platforms.

Counterfeiting is a common occurrence in the luxury space.

Between April and May 2023, knockoff luxury watches worth nearly \$1.3 billion were seized at the Los Angeles International Airport by U.S. Customs and Border Protection ([see story](#)).

"The trade in counterfeit products via online platforms and social media has also increased sharply in the last year," said Florian Adt, COO and general counsel at Mercedes-Benz Intellectual Property GmbH & Co. KG, in a statement.

"Our brand protectors focus on safety-relevant counterfeits, because they endanger people," Mr. Adt said. "However, we are also keeping an eye on the counterfeiting industry's growing business model for digital goods."

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