

18th May 2016

RESPONSE TO QUEEN'S SPEECH – THE DIGITAL ECONOMY BILL

Responding to the proposal for a Digital Economy Bill, which has just been outlined in the Queen's Speech, Phil Buckle, Director General of Electrical Safety First commented:

“We welcome the fact that proposals for the Bill include a strengthening of intellectual property rights, as the dramatic expansion in online sales can only continue. However, such growth will inevitably be accompanied by a rising tide of counterfeit items entering the UK market – government data shows a 15% increase in fake goods sold on social media in just one year¹. This is a particularly important issue in relation to counterfeit electrical products which, unlike a fake designer handbag, can cause fire, serious injury and even prove fatal in some cases.

“We are hopeful this Bill will provide an opportunity to strengthen consumer rights in relation to counterfeit electrical goods. Our report, *A shocking Rip-off: The True Cost of Counterfeit Products*, found that a million people had consciously purchased fake products in a year but the true figure is significantly higher, as many will have unwittingly bought counterfeits. People often buy fakes because they are cheaper but this is usually because they omit key components, or use substandard ones, which can significantly impact on a products' safety and functionality.”

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¹ IP Crime Report 2013-2914