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Welcome to Oxfordshire County Council Trading Standards' Business News Express Issue 5



In this edition, you will find useful information on the following:

- Warning about fake UKBA websites and calls;
- Fraudsters posing as police in scam
- Business Directory debt scams
- Exploding cigarette lighters and dangerous dummies;
- Safety Updates
- Intellectual Property Explained;
- CAA and OFT consult on consumer rights guidance for travel sector
- Shopkeeper guilty of selling counterfeit alcohol

SCAMS

Warning about fake UK Border Agency (UKBA) websites and calls

UKBA are aware of a number of scam e-mails and websites purporting to be sent and operated by UKBA; and of calls made by people posing as UKBA staff.

The scams that we are aware of include:

- Foreign criminals advertising fake UK jobs on the internet. Individuals that apply are told they have a job and are directed to a link to pay for visa and work permit fees. These websites are not operated by UKBA, and you should not click on any of the links or pay any money.
- Students at a number of UK universities have received calls from someone who claims they work for the UKBA, giving a false name and a return phone number. These calls are not from the UKBA, but the caller may appear to be genuine and convincing. The caller may say that there is a serious problem with your immigration status, and that you need to send a payment as soon as possible to prevent further action including deportation.
- A request for payment of a deposit as proof that you have sufficient funds to support your arrival in the UK until your first salary is received.

The scams which we are aware of have been reported by UKBA to Action Fraud, the UK's national fraud reporting centre. There may also be other scams which have not been brought to UKBA's attention.

If you receive such a suspicious call or e-mail, or come across a suspicious website:

- **Do not** give out any personal information, nor confirm that any personal information they have is correct
- **Do not** make any payment
- **Do** report the matter online to [Action Fraud \(www.actionfraud.police.uk\)](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk) or by calling Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040

You should always access the official UKBA website by typing: <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk> into your browser. Please note that official UK Government websites will have the suffix “.gov.uk”. When e-mailing the UKBA, you should also ensure that the e-mail address is genuine: name.surname@ukba.gsi.gov.uk or name.surname@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk . Sometimes these exact addresses will appear on the screen, but when you click on the address, a different e-mail address will be selected, so you should be alert to this.

UK Government bodies will never use free e-mail accounts such as hotmail, yahoomail, or gmail to contact you.

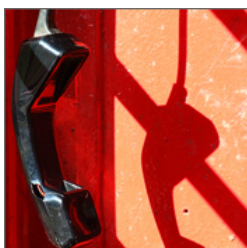
For further information on genuine UKBA charges please see the [Fees for our services](#). If you wish to check whether correspondence is genuine, please visit the [UKBA Visa Application website \(http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/countries/\)](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/countries/) for your country for contact details.

Fraudsters pose as police in cold calling scam

Officers are warning residents to be vigilant after several people have been called by a man claiming to be selling advertising space on behalf of police.

The man has phoned a number of businesses claiming to be a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) who is working on an anti-social behaviour campaign and selling advertising space in a good citizenship magazine.

He also claims to work for Police Community Clubs of Great Britain, which is a legitimate fundraising organisation.



Scam

This man is neither a PCSO nor does he work for Police Community Clubs of Great Britain.

The scam has been reported in Wiltshire and Cheshire. As fraudsters move and change the geographical areas they operate in, all UK residents should also be vigilant about this type of fraud. Any UK resident who has lost money to a fraud like this should report it to Action Fraud.

Wiltshire Police is reminding people that cold calling by phone is often accompanied by high pressure sales techniques and inflated prices. Often the caller is trying to sell you something you don't want and it can be difficult to find out whether or not the caller is genuine.

Business Directory debt scams

Through September, October and November, Trading Standards has received a number of alerts about sole traders and small businesses being targeted in a telephone scam. The callers claim to be a bailiffs or debt collectors and claim that the target business owes money on a business directory agreement (often claiming the agreement is some years old). In a few cases, the target business did have some sort of contract to have an entry in a business directory but owes no money. In other cases, the target business has had no agreement at all for entry in a business directory.

The callers attempt to panic the target into making a large payment immediately. They claim that they are bailiffs and will force entry to the target's premises that day to take goods and equipment if the debt is not paid off immediately. They demand a very large sum, many thousands of pounds and then reduce it substantially so long as payment is made then and there.

These scams may not be successful very often but we have reports that target businesses have paid out between £3000 and £5000.

As always the best advice is to ignore calls demanding payment unless they are back up by written confirmation that a genuine debt is owed. Treat any demand for payment with suspicion if you do not recognise where it has come from and what it is for.

SAFETY

Exploding cigarette lighters and dangerous dummies

The information about exploding cigarette lighters and dangerous dummies has been released by the LGA (local government association) and can be found at this link;

http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/media-releases/-/journal_content/56/10171/3692939/NEWS-TEMPLATE

Safety Updates – an overview

New Notification form for unsafe products - There is a new notification form for producers or distributors to notify local authorities of dangerous products. Please refer to;

<http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/consumer-issues/product-safety>

Toy Safety Standards - EN71 Part 3 (toxicity and chemicals) increased controls on 8 elements to 19.

New Cosmetic Product Safety Regulations are due to come into force on 11 July 2013. The new Regulations will include lots of responsibilities on producers including small/home businesses, including safety assessments. A criteria is being established for product claims.

New rules on teeth whiteners came into force 31 October 2012 which makes them cosmetic products. Products containing or releasing over 0.1% hydrogen peroxide cannot be supplied directly to consumers

Guidance on novelty lighters can be found at;

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/safety/prod_legis/prod_legislation_lighters_en.print.htm

Giant lighters – These must be safe, child resistant and meet the requirements for the transport of dangerous goods i.e. maximum amount of fuel 10gms (TS have an exemption from the HSE for transport)

Fireworks – articles placed on the market after 3 July 2013 must comply with the Pyrotechnic Articles (safety) Regulations and carry a CE mark. Non-CE marked fireworks cannot be sold next year unless documented proof of date of placing on market.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Intellectual Property Explained

The intellectual property office has released an information package explaining intellectual property. The topics include:

- Patents
- Trade marks
- Copyrights
- Designs

You can find all the information at this link;

<http://www.ipa.gov.uk/myip.pdf>

TRAVEL

CAA and OFT consult on consumer rights guidance for travel sector

Holidaymakers booking in the UK should have access to fair, clear and transparent information at the right time according to draft guidance for travel agents, tour operators and price comparison websites published today for consultation by the UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and the Office of Fair Trading (OFT).

The joint guidance covers both aviation specific and general consumer protection legislation. This new draft guidance has been designed to help the travel sector comply with the regulations and raise awareness of its legal responsibilities. Two versions of the draft guidance have been developed: an in-depth guidance document; and also a shorter version for quick and easy reference which sets out key requirements that all businesses operating in the travel industry should be aware of. The CAA and OFT are seeking views on the scope and the extent to which the detail and practical examples provided in both versions of the guidance are useful.

View the [short version of the draft guidance](#), and the [full document](#).

FOOD

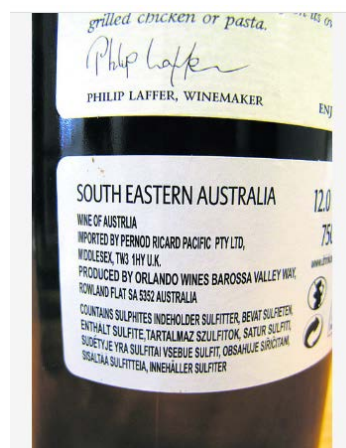
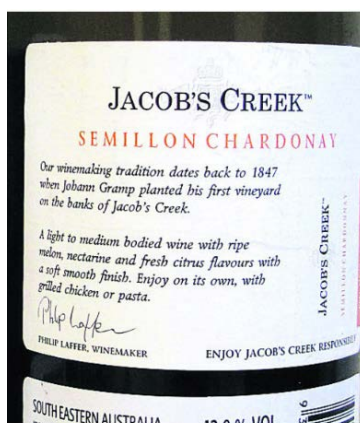
Shopkeeper guilty of selling counterfeit alcohol

A South Oxfordshire shopkeeper who endangered people's health by selling counterfeit alcohol has been fined around £12,000.

Paramjit Singh Khiali of Ansh Food and Wine in Chinnor pleaded guilty to eight charges under food safety and trade mark laws at Oxford Magistrates Court last Friday (November 30).

The 47-year-old was caught after a member of the public alerted Oxfordshire County Council's Trading Standards Team to the fake goods after buying some counterfeit wine.

Following an investigation carried out by Oxfordshire Trading Standards, Mr Singh Khiali was found to be stocking 147 bottles of counterfeit Blossom Hill wine, 28 bottles of counterfeit Jacob's Creek wine and four bottles of Vodka at his store.



Mr Khiali admitted on three separate occasions obtaining alcohol from unknown sources without carrying out any checks and refusing to name his supplier.

Anyone that has any suspicions or concerns about traders offering cheap wine or spirits, please get in touch with the Trading Standards team immediately giving them as many details as possible, and always keep a record of where you buy your alcohol from.

Potential warning signs that an alcoholic drink may be counterfeit include:

- Bottles have two labels, one on top of another
- Spelling mistakes on the labels
- Bottles of the same product filled to different levels
- Bottles of the same product look different
- Writing on the label scratches or rubs off easily.

Businesses should

- Only buy alcohol from a legitimate source such as an established cash and carry or wholesaler.
- If a person approaches you and offers to sell you alcohol, do not buy it and report the incident to trading Standards.
- Keep records of where your supplies come from, make sure you get a receipt and that you keep it as a reference.
- If your customers complain about the alcohol they have bought, speak to Trading Standards for advice and consider removing the rest of the alcohol from sale.
- If you suspicious of any alcohol or other products you have in stock, speak to Trading Standards for advice.

If you suspect that a product is counterfeit contact Trading Standards via Citizens Advice Consumer helpline on 08454 040506, giving as much information as possible.

We always welcome feedback on the newsletter. Please email us at trading.standards@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

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