

## Counterfeit motor vehicle components are dangerous to life

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Product piracy is everywhere. More and more automotive suppliers are finding out that their intellectual property rights are being violated. While counterfeiting safety-relevant motor vehicle parts can cost manufacturers hundreds of millions of dollars, it also causes a major safety risk to consumers. Effective anti-counterfeiting solutions are required to protect the products. Now, the counterfeit-resistant micro colour-code system SECUTAG® also secures motor vehicle supplies.

Nottuln/ Germany, October 4, 2007. U.S. Motor & Equipment Manufacturers Association (MEMA) estimates the illegal counterfeit and knockoff parts business to be a US\$12 billion industry between the global automotive and commercial vehicle markets. In 2006, German customs seized counterfeit automotive products amounting to EUR 5.5 million. This represents an increase of 688 per cent compared to last year. More and more safety-relevant motor vehicle parts, such as brakes, wheels, bearings, belts, filters and steering components are subject to IP infringement according to a study about “The Economic Impact Of Counterfeiting and Piracy“ published by the OECD in 2007. Brake pads made of compressed wood or cow dung, windscreens made of plain sheet glass or deficient steering systems can seriously impair the safety of vehicles and cause or contribute to serious car accidents, exposing drivers and passengers to elevated health and safety risks.

Over the past 10 years Nottuln/ Germany-based 3S Simons Security Systems GmbH has been providing forgery-proof SECUTAG®, the product protection system which effectively secures original products by means of micro colour coding. The automotive industry uses these codes to protect their spare parts, accessories, packaging and security seals. The security system helps manufacturers to quickly and easily identify counterfeit products. It is based on the world’s smallest micro colour-code particles, sized between five to 45 micrometres (µm) and made up of melamine alkyd polymers. The codes consist of four to eleven different colour layers which are stratified in the so-called sandwich process. The layers, which can have a thickness of up to 0.8 micrometres, are visualised by using standard, ultraviolet or infrared colours. The selection of colours as well as the order and thickness of the coloured layers define the individual manufacturer code.

The micro colour-code particles are invisible to the naked eye. But they can easily be identified by means of a standard microscope with a magnification level of 100x. The colour-code system is designed to protect a wide range of products in all major industries – especially in the field of electronics, mechanical engineering and terotechnology as well as packaging. The system can easily be integrated into any manufacturing process without major changes to assembly line operations. The chemical composition of the colour-codes allows the users to apply them to both hard and soft materials. Furthermore, they can be added to liquids, compounds and adhesives.

The polymers are extremely temperature and chemical resistant: the colour codes can be exposed to temperatures between minus 80 to plus 200 degree Celsius over a long period of time. The codes even have a short-term heat resistance of up to 350 degree Celsius. Additionally, the particles are resistant to organic solvents and chemicals, such as acids, bases and dilutors. The micro colour-code particles meet the high material test standards of the automotive industry. As a result, the system is the ideal solution for securing motor vehicle components.

The colour-code system is accepted as decisive evidence in international courts. It is also used to deal with entities that infringe on trademarks, brand portfolios and patents, or to dismiss unjustified claims concerning product liability or claims for damages. Moreover, it supports customs authorities to improve confiscation processes by quickly proving the authenticity of a product.

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3S Simons Security Systems GmbH, located in the German Nottuln, is a renowned manufacturer of micro colour-code systems ensuring product protection and anti-counterfeit action. SECUTAG®, the smallest micro colour-code particles world-wide, serve as unambiguous identification marks of genuine products and have been forgery-proof for more than a decade. The product portfolio of the company includes, besides research and development of innovative security technologies, also a vast array of services in the realm of individually designed product protection. The negative economic impact of product piracy has challenged 3S Simons Security Systems GmbH to develop continuously optimised security strategies providing cross-sectoral protection against counterfeiters.

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