



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

檳城消費人協會 பிளாங்கு பயனீட்டாளர் சங்கம்

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Press Statement

23 November 2016

SUBSTANDARD GOODS FLOOD THE MARKET

The Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP) found substandard goods that include locks, stationery, school bags, watches, electrical goods, shoes, tools, and toys flooding the market during its recent market survey.

Some of these items are priced as low as RM2, their prices were a fraction of a similar product of a better quality but appeared to be popular among consumers of the lower income group.

CAP's point of contention is whether these products meet safe product requirements because being cheap is pointless if they are not safe for consumers' use.

The products – most of which originated from China and Thailand – were sold at places such as supermarkets, mini markets, flea markets, pasar malam, certain shops in malls, and hardware shops.

Our survey showed that these imported products are often labelled in foreign languages and not in Bahasa Malaysia.

The question persisted on whether the products are safe to use and of good quality. Consumers often complain that although the products are cheap, they hardly last for a month of use. Plastic parts may easily break and leave dangerous jagged edges or, if toys, small parts that can choke children if they are of poor quality.

Consumers who go for cheap goods may end up spending more when they buy replacements for the defective or broken ones. Moreover, these cheap products are not of guaranteed quality and thus not returnable after they have been sold.

Under the Consumer's Protection Act 1999 clause 32(1) and clause 32(2) (a), goods supplied to a consumer shall imply a guarantee that the goods are of acceptable quality, free from minor defects, safe and durable.

CAP wonders how such poor quality products can flood the market, particularly electrical items which are supposed to be approved by the Energy Commission and SIRIM before they can even be considered for importation. Apparently the current system is dysfunctional; not only did they not have 'SIRIM' stickers, they even managed to pass through the Royal Malaysia Customs Department which should not have permitted any electrical goods to be imported without SIRIM's approval.

It is often displayed in shops that "Goods sold are not returnable". This is in contradiction to Section 42 of the Consumer's Protection Act 1999 which requires a supplier to "provide a refund of any money paid" if "the supplier cannot reasonably expected to repair or replace the goods". Consumers are ensured of goods of "acceptable quality" and their "fitness for particular purpose" in Section 32 and 33 of the Act.

Therefore, CAP urges the Ministry of Domestic Trade, Consumers Affairs and Co-Operative to intervene and enforce the Act immediately because the sale of poor quality products albeit cheap is rampant and may pose a threat to the health and safety of consumers. It also turned Malaysia into a dumping ground for substandard goods.

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