

NSK letter to BMG customers

Date; May 11, 2022

Re: Confiscation of counterfeit bearings

Dear valued customer,

As part of NSK's strategy to protect its bearing users, we initiated the search and seizure of counterfeit products at a warehouse in Tulisa Park, Johannesburg on 22 April 2022. Thousands of replica bearings were discovered, 98% of which were industrial types. Although the presence of fake bearings in the South African market is rare, here at NSK we are committed to stamping out this type of criminal activity in the interests of quality assurance for BMG customers.

The replica bearings were confiscated by The Hawks Intellectual Property Rights Section from the Serious Commercial Crime Investigation team. As an estimate, the value of the haul at the large-scale distribution warehouse was put at over R5 million. Criminal and civil proceedings are now underway against the perpetrators, who will shortly receive a court summons.

Please rest assured, this is an isolated case – the market in South Africa is not flooded with counterfeit bearings. However, swift action is always necessary in such instances, where end user protection is our top priority.

We understand that budgetary pressures are driving many of you to shop around for irresistible bargains, but these often come at a far higher price. Low-quality counterfeit bearings will fail prematurely, sometimes catastrophically, presenting a safety risk to both humans and expensive capital assets. In almost all cases, using fake bearings leads to higher lifecycle costs. Steel quality is the differentiating factor, where a disparity in operating life of up to 20 times (between genuine and counterfeit) is not uncommon.

Some bearing users also increase their vulnerability to counterfeits by employing subcontractors for equipment repairs on assets such as electric motors, pumps, gearboxes and fans. Unless subcontractors are vetted to ensure they understand this risk and have appropriate controls in place, they may inadvertently purchase and install counterfeit bearings during repair or refurbishment.

In the interest of protecting yourselves from the dangers of fake industrial bearings, always buy from authorised NSK distributors such as BMG (and check that any third-party service/repair companies do the same). We have a successful 30-year business relationship with BMG, a company that only ever buys its products from original sources.

There are of course some tell-tale signs that can help you to identify a fake bearing. Aside from a price that looks too good to be true, look out for packaging that features the incorrect logo, markings, branding, stickers, holograms, bar coding or manufacturer codes/dates.

Also, you can check whether the bearing carries the correct part number etching. Poor machining quality is another giveaway of bogus bearings.

As a further protective measure, why not download the free WBA (World Bearings Association) app from www.stopfakebearings.com. NSK is a proud member of the WBA and helped to develop the app in conjunction with other global bearing manufacturers. Simply scan the barcode on the packaging to confirm the authenticity of your bearings. If your NSK bearing does not carry a code (not all products have one) and you suspect it may be counterfeit, please contact your local NSK representative immediately.

In short, our advice is clear: when purchasing bearings you should always exercise due caution. Only buy from authorised NSK distributors like BMG to be certain that rigorous quality assurance procedures are in place, negating the need for bearing checks.

Kind regards,



T. Yamashita

Managing Director
NSK South Africa (Pty) Ltd.

25 Galaxy Ave, Linbro Business Park, Sandton 2146, South Africa