

The problem of counterfeit pyrotechnics

WesCom Signal and Rescue's Indian Distributor AS Moloobhoy is standing up to unethical suppliers in India and working tirelessly to fight the dangerous practice of redating pyrotechnics

Today, many people assume that counterfeit products are the biggest issue of selling pyrotechnics, when actually it is the re-dating of products. Not many people are aware of this practice and procurement officers should be fully educated about how to ensure they are buying quality products. This is a particular issue that WesCom Signal and Rescue's Indian distributor, AS Moloobhoy, has lobbied against and tried to improve import procedures for life-saving equipment. Indeed, AS Moloobhoy, which has been a Pains Wessex supplier for almost 80 years, has conducted a 30-year campaign against re-dating and re-labelling expired marine distress signals in India.

AS Moloobhoy has been fighting a seemingly endless war on ethics with the Indian Government, against other suppliers and distributors for over ten years. In India, its main competition is not another SOLAS approved brand or OEM also making pyrotechnics, but it is the refurbished, recycled and unethical second-hand market that re-sells outdated and expired pyrotechnics as 'new'. Therefore, the firm launched a campaign in India, to encourage people to stay away from cheap and duplicate product choices, that could eventually cost you your life.

The campaign has documented several occasions, where, over the years, customers or distributors do not dispose of their expired pyrotechnics, but resort to re-selling them, after re-dating them in India's extensive 'grey' market.

The first attempt at curbing this illegal and alarming practice was to legally launch and operate the first and the largest DG (Director General of Shipping, Government of India) approved pyrotechnics disposal facility in Mumbai, Wada, Maharashtra that was approved by the Department of Explosives (www.asmoloobhoy.com/Service/Disposal).

After following the mandated guidelines, AS Moloobhoy launched the first Eco-Friendly and Government approved pyrotechnics disposal facility in Asia, giving customers the option to dispose of expired pyrotechnics ethically and legally, in an environmentally controlled chamber, against the issuance of a Certificate from the Government of India, for a basic cost. For the first time, this gave customers an alternative to dumping their pyrotechnics overboard in the ocean, (thereby endangering aquatic life) or burying them in the ground, or re-selling them to the second-hand market.

However, the difficulty here is that the services cannot be free of charge – which is what is often demanded from customers – but to ensure the best possible service, there needs to be a small fee, to ensure the outdated pyrotechnics can be disposed of safely and efficiently.

After several years, although the sale of expired pyrotechnics is still rampant in India, the company has managed to curb a significant percentile of the atrocities relating to this practice, and made the re-sale of WesCom Signal and Rescue pyrotechnics close to negligible.

Often other OEMs are being represented by distributors in India who mis-declare goods or pyrotechnics when importing them into India, calling them 'liferaft spares' instead of referring to them as dangerous or hazardous goods. This saves them time, capital, effort and they are able to surpass several governmental permissions and Customs procedures that are only mandated for 'dangerous goods' or 'explosives'. This

too, gives the said Agent or Representative a price advantage over AS Moloobhoy, which then gets passed on to the end customer, making it impossible to ethically compete.

Managing Director, Nafeesa Moloobhoy, sits on several boards and works closely with the Marine Segment of the Indian Government. Nafeesa is working tirelessly and diligently to ensure that strict measures are taken to monitor and control unethical importing of hazardous cargo in India.

To ensure complete transparency, AS Moloobhoy uses LOT Numbers, to link stock against the correct and relevant Bill of Entry or Lading, and ensure that the pyrotechnics are original or fake. This has managed to preserve the brand image in India, and today, all customers across the board know that if they are buying WesCom Signal and Rescue pyrotechnics, the source is authentic and therefore not duplicates.

At the forefront of everything WesCom Signal and Rescue does, is saving lives, and by changing these life-saving devices and cutting corners with regulations puts lives at risk. That is why it is vital that clients purchase products from approved distributors to make sure that they receive the correct manuals, labels and documentation. Aside from the moral issues, ultimately, in the event that something goes wrong those involved with these illegal practices could be held accountable leading to compensation claims, heavy fines or jail.

After several complaints filed with the Director General Of Shipping (DGS) and IRS (Indian Register of Shipping), A.S.Moloobhoy and WesCom Signal and Rescue are jointly holding a one-day training seminar in mid-February 2018. The event, to be held in Mumbai, India, will host more than 100 surveyors, DGS officers and purchasing managers of many Authorities and Shipping Companies in India, to educate them on the differences between an original Pyro and tampered Pyros. ●

WESCOM
Signal & Rescue

WesCom Signal and Rescue is the world's leading marine distress signal manufacturer and is fully committed to ensuring the safety of lives at sea. It is the world's leading supplier of marine distress signals, under the brand names: Pains Wessex, Comet, Oroquieta and Aurora.

The quality, technological superiority and innovative design of its products combined with worldwide approvals and manufacturing to ISO 9001 standard ensures the brands are still market-leaders today.

For more information about AS Moloobhoy, please visit:

www.asmoloobhoy.com.

For more information about WesCom Signal and Rescue, please visit:

www.wescomsignal.com.