



# OFFICE of PRIVATE SECTOR

LIAISON INFORMATION REPORT (LIR)



## HEALTHCARE & PUBLIC HEALTH SECTOR

21 April 2020

LIR 200421003

### Indicators of Fraudulent 3M Personal Protective Equipment

The FBI's Minneapolis Division, in coordination with the Office of Private Sector (OPS), Criminal Investigative Division (CID), and 3M, prepared this LIR to make the Healthcare and Public Health Sectors aware of indicators related to fraudulent sales solicitation of 3M Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), or indicators of counterfeit 3M PPE, including N95 respirators.<sup>1</sup>

*References in this LIR to any specific commercial product, process or service or the use of any corporate name herein is for informational purposes only and does not constitute an endorsement or recommendation of that product, process, service or corporation on behalf of the FBI.*

Since December 2019, an increasing number of businesses and consumers have been affected by fraudulent sales of PPE. The FBI has received at least 45 consumer complaints of fraud and counterfeiting involving 3M PPE, involving over \$642,000 in losses.

#### **3M Recommends Only Purchasing 3M Respirators from US-based 3M Authorized Distributors**

While some N95 respirators are manufactured by 3M overseas, 3M recommends 3M-made N95 respirators should only be purchased by customers in the United States from 3M's authorized channel partners located inside the United States.

- Products that use 3M's name and trademarks as well as 3M's National Institute of Occupational Health and Safety (NIOSH) approval numbers should only be sourced directly from 3M or 3M's authorized channel partners in the United States.
- Products that bear 3M's NIOSH approval numbers [such as TC 84A-007 (see graphic 1) or TC 84A-0427 (see graphic 2)] but not 3M's name or logos are not authorized and should be considered fraudulent.

<sup>1</sup> The non-delivery or fraudulent sale of non-existent goods, the delivery of unapproved or fraudulent goods, and the trafficking of counterfeit-labelled goods are investigated under different criminal violations by the FBI, however these types of crimes all pose challenges to public health and worsen the ability to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak.



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**Graphic 1: Example of Fraudulent N95 Respirator TC 84A-007 Using 3M’s NIOSH Approval Numbers**



This is an **example of two respirators with fraudulent NIOSH markings**. Valpro Safety is selling the Ranger 821 and Ranger 821V respirators using the 3M approval number (TC-84A-007) and label without 3M’s permission. (Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/usernotices/counterfeitResp.html>)

**Graphic 2: Example of Fraudulent N95 Respirator TC 84A-0427 Using 3M’s NIOSH Approval Numbers**



This is an **example of a respirator with fraudulent NIOSH markings**. The NT-V2 Nano Bi-Directional respirator is being advertised as if it is NIOSH-approved, including a NIOSH approval number. While the TC number (TC 84A-0427) is valid, it does not belong to Pasture Pharma. Instead, TC 84A-0427, is an approval number for a 3M full facepiece respirator with cartridges. (Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/usernotices/counterfeitResp.html>)

- N95 respirators that bear 3M’s logos or trademarks without corresponding NIOSH approval numbers or additional external markings (see graphic 3) should be considered counterfeit.



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**Graphic 3: Examples of Proper External Markings for NIOSH-Approved Respirators**

Example of Exterior Markings on a NIOSH-approved Filtering Facepiece Respirator

(Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/usernotices/counterfeitResp.html> )

3M distribution centers inside the United States do import N95 models 1870+, 9210+, and 9211+ directly from 3M’s manufacturing facilities overseas. This occurs, however, within 3M’s own internal supply chain operations.

- Importation of 3M respirator products, particularly in high volumes, to non-3M distribution centers or unauthorized resellers<sup>2</sup> should be considered suspicious.

### Indicators of Fraudulent or Counterfeit Sales of 3M Personal Protective Equipment

Fraudsters may either purport to be 3M as part of a scam, or may claim to be a distributor. Some of the most common tactics used by criminals include the following:

- Most fraudsters demand up-front payment, when 3M does not request advance payment.
- Fraudsters may claim access to significant inventories of 3M PPE. They often claim to be able to export products from a country where 3M products are not sold or distributed.

<sup>2</sup> A list of authorized resellers for 3M products can be found here: [www.3m.com/3M/en\\_US/company-us/help-center](http://www.3m.com/3M/en_US/company-us/help-center)



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- Many fraudsters circulate 3M technical datasheets, certification documents, or photos of 3M PPE in order to lend an air of authenticity to their offers.
- Fraudsters may utilize the 3M brand in their domain name, e-mail address, or social media page. Approximately 75 fraudulent websites have already been identified and disrupted.
- Sellers of counterfeit products may use false approval numbers, or omit certification or approval details on the external packaging or markings on PPE.

Additionally, 3M has not changed the price it charges for N95 respirators as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. As of 31 March 2020, the price of single 3M N95 respirators range from \$0.68 to \$3.40, depending on the model number, with the most commonly sold models (8210 and 1860) having list prices of \$1.02 to \$1.31 (see graphic 4).



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**Graphic 4: Single-Respirator List Prices for the Most Common 3M N95 Respirator Models Sold in the US**

	<b>Model #</b>	<b>List Price (USD)</b>
<b>Surgical N95 Respirators</b>	1804	\$0.68
	1804S	\$0.68
	1860	\$1.27
	1860S	\$1.27
	1870+	\$1.78
<b>Standard N95 Respirators</b>	8210	\$1.02 - \$1.31
	8210Plus	\$1.18 - \$1.50
	8210V	\$1.48 - \$1.88
	8110S	\$1.08 - \$1.37
	8200	\$0.63 - \$0.80
	8511	\$2.45 - \$3.11
	9105	\$0.64 - \$0.81
	9105S	\$0.64 - \$0.81
	9210+	\$1.40 - \$1.78
	9211+	\$2.68 - \$3.40

(Source: <https://multimedia.3m.com/mws/media/18036700/fraudulent-activity-price-gouging-and-counterfeit-products.pdf> )



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**If you think you have information of suspicious activity by a vendor, or believe you were a victim of a scam or attempted fraud involving PPE, please report it:**

- 3M has created a fraud hotline, 1 (800) 426-8688 for the US and Canada to help detect fraud and avoid counterfeit products. In addition to the hotline, you can report a concern at [www.go.3m.com/covidfraud](http://www.go.3m.com/covidfraud).
- Submit a tip to the FBI online at [tips.fbi.gov](http://tips.fbi.gov).
- If it's an online sale, submit your complaint to the Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) at [ic3.gov](http://ic3.gov).
- If it involves a counterfeit product, please submit your complaint to IC3 and to the National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center, at [IPRCenter.gov](http://IPRCenter.gov).
- Contact the National Center for Disaster Fraud Hotline at 866-720-5721 or via email at [disaster@leo.gov](mailto:disaster@leo.gov).

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides the National Personal Protective Technology Laboratory Certified Equipment List Search: [https://www2a.cdc.gov/drds/cel/cel\\_form\\_code.asp](https://www2a.cdc.gov/drds/cel/cel_form_code.asp)

This LIR was disseminated from the OPS Information Sharing and Analysis Unit. Direct any requests and questions to your FBI Private Sector Coordinator at your local FBI Field Office:





<https://www.fbi.gov/contact-us/field-offices>



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### Traffic Light Protocol (TLP) Definitions