

SIA's New Anti-Counterfeiting Whitepaper: A Roadmap in the Battle Against Counterfeit Semiconductors

Posted by: Andrew Olney, Chairman, SIA Anti-counterfeiting Task Force on Wednesday, August 28, 2013 at 5:00:00 pm

Like many other products, semiconductors can be counterfeited. Counterfeiters often “harvest” semiconductor components from old circuit boards and then re-mark them to indicate they are new or that they have better performance than the original components. These counterfeit semiconductors, which may be indistinguishable from authentic semiconductors, are then sold through a network of international brokers. These counterfeit chips can end up in a wide range of critical consumer, industrial, medical, and military applications, posing a clear and immediate threat to public health and safety.

According to a new [SIA whitepaper](#) released today, there is, fortunately, a straightforward action that can be taken immediately to help stop the flow of counterfeit semiconductors into the United States: buy semiconductor products either directly from Original Component Manufacturers (OCMs) or their authorized distributors or resellers.

“The only way to ensure that semiconductor components are authentic, and have optimal quality and reliability levels, is to buy them exclusively through authorized sources,” according to the whitepaper, *Winning the Battle Against Counterfeit Semiconductors*.

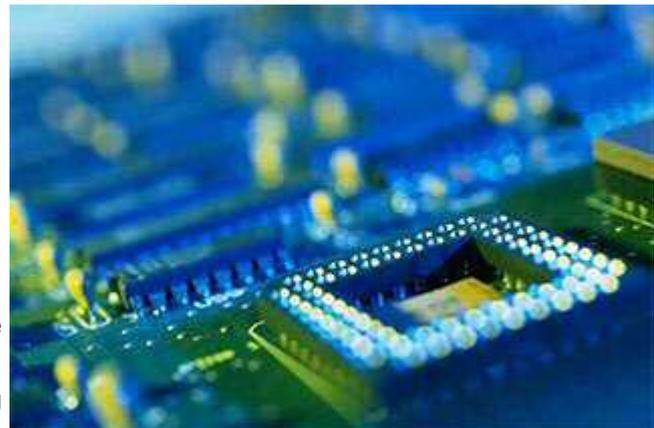
The whitepaper explains how counterfeit semiconductors threaten health, safety and security; how the purchase of semiconductors through authorized supply chains can prevent counterfeit infiltration; and how to avoid counterfeit legacy products, among other topics.

The failure of counterfeit semiconductor products can have catastrophic consequences. The whitepaper identifies numerous known incidents of counterfeit semiconductors causing or potentially causing health, safety, and security issues, including:

- **Medical devices:** A counterfeit semiconductor component was identified in an Automated External Defibrillator (AED), resulting in a defibrillator over-voltage condition. Failure to detect and address this issue could have resulted in improper electrical shocks being applied to heart attack victims, thus jeopardizing their lives.
- **Household appliances:** A counterfeit semiconductor component caused a fire in the control circuitry in a vacuum cleaner for residential use. This fire was successfully contained, but it had the potential to result in major property damage or even loss of life.
- **Air travel:** A counterfeit semiconductor failed in a power supply used for airport landing lights. This did not result in any reported airline take-off or landing incidents, but the potential for such incidents was obvious.

SIA and its member companies are actively working to raise awareness of the threats posed by counterfeit semiconductors and to reduce the supply of these illegal products. Working closely with distributors, customers and government agencies, SIA has developed straightforward, proven approaches for avoiding counterfeit semiconductor products. These tactics – outlined in the whitepaper – include:

- Increasing awareness of counterfeit components among lawmakers, government agency officials, and military leaders.
- Working closely with U.S. Customs and Border Protection to stop dangerous counterfeits before they enter the U.S. marketplace.
- Partnering with law enforcement to prosecute those responsible for manufacturing or trafficking in counterfeit products.



- Developing international standards for supply chain assurance and anti-counterfeiting.
- Launching legal actions against suppliers erroneously identifying themselves as authorized distributors.

Working together and using the SIA whitepaper as a roadmap, we can win the battle against counterfeit semiconductor products and help ensure the safety and security of critical technologies that are vital to American consumers and to the United State economy.

[Download the SIA Whitepaper: Winning the Battle Against Counterfeit Semiconductor Products](#)

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