

## Identifying Counterfeit Square D Circuit Breakers

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### PURPOSE

The purpose of this bulletin is to provide information for identifying counterfeit Square D breakers to DOE facilities.

### BACKGROUND

In the last two years Square D had filed numerous lawsuits and won several settlements aimed at halting the sale and distribution of counterfeit breakers which infringe upon Square D's patents and trademarks. As many as a half-million counterfeit Square D breakers may have entered U. S. markets since 2005. Three distributors have issued recalls in cooperation with the Consumers Product Safety Commission (CPCS):

<http://www.cpsc.gov/CPSCPUB/PREREL/prhtml08/08151.html>

<http://www.cpsc.gov/CPSCPUB/PREREL/prhtml08/08054.html>

<http://www.cpsc.gov/CPSCPUB/PREREL/prhtml07/07036.html>

Square D also has a Counterfeit Circuit Breaker Homepage at:

[http://www.squared.com/us/squared/corporate\\_info.nsf/unid/7A9875AC2EF40B9D852572FE004E5FD7/\\$file/Counterfeit\\_CB\\_Frameset.htm](http://www.squared.com/us/squared/corporate_info.nsf/unid/7A9875AC2EF40B9D852572FE004E5FD7/$file/Counterfeit_CB_Frameset.htm)

### WHAT ARE THE HAZARDS?

Because counterfeit breakers may not provide the rated current interrupting capacity and containment features of an authentic breaker, an electrical surge could result in an explosion or fire with subsequent property damage, injury or even the loss of life.

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Each site should take the following actions:

- Review procurement documentation to determine if any breakers covered in the CPSC recalls have been purchased
- Review vendor data for new construction, subcontracted plant modification, and maintenance since 2005 to determine if any of the circuit breakers used are covered under the CPSC Recalls
- Monitor the DOE Suspect Counterfeit Web Items page (<http://www.hss.energy.gov/csa/csp/sci/>) or the CPCS recall website (<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prerel.html>) for additional recalls of counterfeit Square D breakers.
- Inspect suspect breakers to identify counterfeits.
- Report any counterfeit breakers identified through the Occurrence Reporting and Processing System (ORPS) and obtain guidance for disposition of counterfeit breakers from the local Office of the Inspector General.

If you have any questions, please contact Tom Williams at 301-903-4859 or by e-mail at [thomas.e.williams@hq.doe.gov](mailto:thomas.e.williams@hq.doe.gov).

### IDENTIFICATION OF COUNTERFEIT BREAKERS

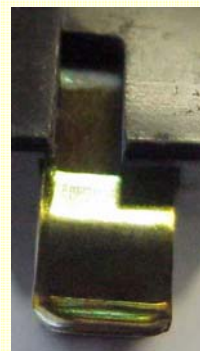
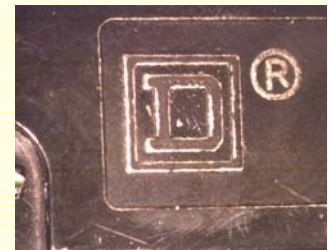
The counterfeit circuit breakers are black and are labeled as Square D QO-series models 110, 115, 120, 130, 210, 215, 220, 225, 230, 235, 240, 250, 260, 280, 1515, 1520, 2020, 2125, 315, 340, 350, 360, and 3100. Actual Square D circuit breakers have:



(a) the amp rating written on the handle in white paint on the front of the breaker;

[Note: Prior to 1999 the amp rating on authentic Square D breakers was molded into the handle rather than painted.]

(b) the Square D insignia molded onto the breaker side, and:



(c) a yellow chromate mounting clip with half of the top of the clip visible.

(Photos Courtesy North American Breaker Co.)

If your breaker, labeled as Square D, does **not** match this description, it could be **counterfeit**.

(signed)

Glenn S. Podonsky  
Chief Health, Safety and Security Officer  
Office of Health, Safety and Security



# PREVENT EVENTS

## Learning from Industry Experience

**PREVENT EVENTS is intended for use by personnel during morning meetings, pre-job briefings, and work unit meetings to communicate key industry experience.**

### Management:

1. Do we have an assigned Suspect Counterfeit Items Coordinator?
2. Is our coordinator monitoring the DOE SCI website and the CPSC website for electrical safety issues?
3. Are our electrical drawings and equipment data accurate?
4. Do we have an accurate list of new construction and major refurbishment involving electrical work since 2005?
5. Do we have a procedure in place for electrical equipment inspections?
6. Are we ensuring only qualified electricians remove breakers for inspection?

### Supervisors and Workers:

**INSPECTION NOTE:** The amp rating painted on the handle is the only indicator that can be verified while a breaker is in service. Other identifying features require the breaker to be removed for inspection.

1. Remember, only a qualified electrician should perform any work inside an electrical panel
2. Has an appropriate lock-out/tag-out (LO/TO) been performed prior to inspection of installed breaker?
3. Does this issue affect my personal residence?

