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## Tips: how to recognise a genuine online shop

**Thanks to Black Friday and Christmas, the year end is not just the most profitable time of year for online shops. It is also peak season for product pirates and fake shops.**

Consumers are in the mood for shopping, and every retailer wants a piece of the pie. Unfortunately, that also includes fake shops and product pirates. This year's figures from the Federal Office for Customs and Border Security once again show an increase of around 30% in findings of counterfeit goods purchased on the internet.

It is thus all the more important for genuine online shops to win their customers' trust and keep it over the long term by communicating clearly. A few key features are sufficient to identify a genuine trader. STOP PIRACY and HANDELSVERBAND.swiss explain what makes an online provider particularly trustworthy and what shoppers need to take a closer look at before ordering.

### 1. Web address

Cybercriminals often use an altered version of an existing web address. For example, they may pretend to have a connection with Switzerland by using extensions such as '-switzerland' and '-suisse'. Moreover, a '.ch' ending doesn't necessarily mean that a site's contents actually come from Switzerland. Because people and companies domiciled abroad can buy '.ch' domains too.

### 2. Legal notice and contact options

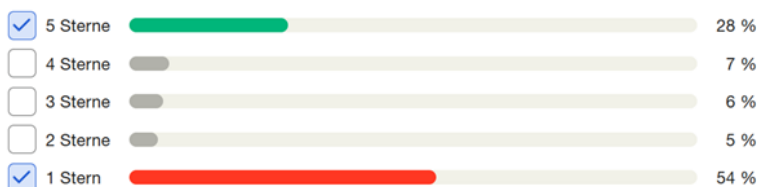
A correct legal notice contains the company's address, an email address and legal information, such as a reference to the company's inclusion in the commercial register. If there is no legal notice or it is incomplete, this may be a sign that the shop is fake. There must also be a contact option of some sort – a chat link, an email address and, where possible, a phone number.

### 3. Ratings

Online shops that have no ratings or hardly any ratings are suspect. This may be a sign that the shop was only recently set up. Online shops that mainly have very good or very bad ratings are often fakes. A large number of very bad ratings points to annoyed, deceived customers, while a large number of positive ratings often implies that the ratings have been faked or bought. This means that shoppers need to see a remarkable number of positive ratings as a warning sign too, rather than only worrying about bad or missing ratings.

#### **Bewertungen** ★ 1,8

Insgesamt 37 155



*An example of suspicious ratings (source: NCSC)*



#### 4. Seals of quality

Fake online shops often use free seals of quality to give the impression that they are genuine. The best way for shoppers to protect themselves from this kind of scam is to visit the official website of the seal provider and check the authenticity of the seal of quality there. Well-known seals of quality in Switzerland include: [Swiss Online Garantie](#) and [Trusted Shops](#).

#### 5. Returns of goods

Customers in Switzerland are not legally entitled to exchange or return goods bought, but many Swiss online retailers voluntarily offer the right to return goods. If this option is not available, shoppers should be cautious.

#### 6. Price

If the prices seem too good to be true, the offer could be a scam. Genuine providers also offer discounts, but there is generally a time restriction and the reduction is normally a plausible amount compared with the usual price.

More tips on how to recognise counterfeits are available at: [www.stop-piracy.ch](http://www.stop-piracy.ch)

**STOP PIRACY** is the Swiss anti-counterfeiting and piracy platform. The non-profit organisation works to educate and raise awareness among consumers as well as to promote cooperation between the business community and the authorities. STOP PIRACY provides the general public with facts, analyses and information about the risks of counterfeiting and piracy, and what lies behind them.

**Links:** Tips for consumers: [How to recognise counterfeits](#)

**Contact for queries: STOP PIRACY Swiss Anti-Counterfeiting and Piracy Platform**

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