A Consumer Fraud Alert that Could Keep You from Going Blind - Time Sensitive

August 17, 2017 - Although I haven't seen a single TV news report on it, Amazon is in the process of recalling eclipse sunglasses. The glasses were sold through Amazon to people who want to watch the total eclipse of the sun on Monday, August 21st. The company now suspects that many of the glasses sold were actually counterfeit products and that they may not actually protect the eyes of people who look directly at the sun. As bad as that sounds, in our opinion the company's response to the issue is completely inadequate.

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Eclipse glasses are dark. Very, very dark. They block approximately 100,000 times more light than traditional sun glasses. Because of this, they can be used to look directly at the sun without damaging your eyes. The real glasses caring a safety certification known as ISO 12312-2.

Apparently, out of an abundance of caution, Amazon decided to start checking on the certification for eclipse glasses being sold on their site. We applaud them for doing so. As it turned out, they were unable to make some of those verifications. As a result, they started pulling the glasses off of their website.

They also started the process of notifying people that purchased the glasses via email. Again, we applaud them for this but given the tight time constraints - the eclipse is just a few days away -they really need to do more.

Notifying the purchaser of these glasses may not have the needed affect. What about people who purchased the glasses as gifts. Or what about any small businesses that may have made purchases and then given the glasses away to clients?

Unfortunately, Amazon isn't releasing the brand names of the suspect glasses either. A spokesperson for the company told PBS's NewsHour that, "they werenâ€™t listing specific brands or products 'because there may be legitimate versions under the same name.'" This makes it nearly impossible to for consumers to know if they have a reason to be worried about the eclipse glasses that may be in their possession.

At this point, consumers have no real way of knowing the glasses they purchased were originally sold to whomever they bought them from on Amazon. It's a real shame, but because of this, the best thing you can do on Monday is not look at the sun even if you have the glasses in your possession. Looking at the sun without the protection provided by legitimate eclipse glasses can result in permanent damage to your eyes and blindness. It just isn't worth the risk.

byJim Malmberg
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