

ADDRESSING FALSE CLAIMS, FAKE WEBSITES IN LIGHT OF COVID-19

As the world responds to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), consumers are looking for basic goods online at an increased frequency. Fake websites are popping up quickly and trying to take advantage of the current crisis. If your company provides goods that are in high demand, you should be on high alert for these sites, which may use a combination of your company name, trademarks and copyrights to offer your products in an attempt to defraud consumers. Many such sites are also making false claims related to stopping the COVID-19 virus.

Our Intellectual Property attorneys are closely monitoring the situation and actively assisting clients in these instances. We recommend taking proactive steps to mitigate risk, including:

- monitoring your customer service line carefully for complaints about orders that are not being received and investigate any reported online sources of your products to verify they are a genuine vendor;
- monitoring the internet with daily searches for your key product names to identify infringers; and
- communicating with your customers proactively through your official website and social media channels to alert consumers to these scams and direct them to your authorized vendors or customer service line if they have any questions about procuring authentic products.

If you identify infringers, please consider working with counsel to take the following actions:

- Send takedown notices and abuse reports to the domain name registrars and/or hosting sites.
- Send cease and desist letters to all entities identifiable through investigations into the addresses, phone numbers and e-mails listed on these sites, as well as tracing website information.
- Report the sites to the appropriate state and federal authorities (i.e. [Federal Trade Commission \(FTC\) Complaints](#)).
- Formal civil actions, such as a Temporary Restraining Order, may also be an option.

PEOPLE

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SERVICES AND INDUSTRIES

Intellectual Property

Trademark

Copyright



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The legal landscape associated with the COVID-19 pandemic is evolving almost as quickly as the pandemic itself. Armstrong Teasdale's Intellectual Property attorneys are already assisting clients with these measures and will continue to monitor and provide updates regarding these developments.