

## HEAD OFFICE

4 Carnavon Street  
Private Mail Bag  
GPO, Suva  
Phone - General Office: 3300792, 3310183  
Chief Executive Officer: 3305864  
Fax: 3300115 | Email: [complaints@consumersfiji.org](mailto:complaints@consumersfiji.org)

## LAUTOKA/West

Suite 4 Popular Building  
Vidilo Street  
PO Box 5396, Lautoka  
Phone: 6664987 | Fax: 6652846  
Email: [consumerltk@connect.com.fj](mailto:consumerltk@connect.com.fj)

## LABASA/North

Level 1, Lot 41 Raza Properties Ltd  
Nasekula Road  
PO Box 64, Labasa  
Phone: 8812559 | Fax: 8812559  
Email: [colbs@connect.com.fj](mailto:colbs@connect.com.fj)

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Feature Article

## Avoid Fake Perfume

Buying perfume is a tradition for some consumers whenever there is a sale. They happily spend quite a bit to own that bottle of perfume which they had been eying for a while.

But, has it ever occurred to anyone that their purchase may be counterfeit or fake?

No doubt, it is easy to be fooled — some counterfeits cannot be distinguished from the real one. They may look real but who knows what is inside the bottle – fragrance or simply coloured water!

Counterfeit or fake perfumes have become a reality globally as well as in Fiji. There are new levels of fake perfume that has entered the market where perfumes are very close to the original one in terms of packaging, the bottle, and the scent but the scent is not long lasting and lacks the smell of the original designer perfume.

The Council has received queries and concerns from some consumers over the quality of perfumes sold at some retail outlets. Among the concerns raised, is why some branded perfumes cost an arm and a leg, yet, their fragrance lasts for 30 minutes. Recently a consumer purchased two different branded perfumes for \$169 during a sale. After using it for a day or two, she realised that the perfume was fake because there was hardly any fragrance. She went to the store to return the perfume and she was refunded full sum.

Some consumers have also expressed concern as to why some retail outlets don't provide in-store perfume testers. Testers are important as it gives an interested buyer a sense of what the fragrance smells like – helping him/her to decide on whether to buy the perfume or not.

The worst case is when the testers are available but the spray nozzles are removed. This is as bad as having no testers at all. Ultimately, consumers are denied the right to choose, a significant right to be able to choose from a range of products.

In such situation, there is high level of suspicion on the authenticity of the perfumes and the removal of nozzle from testers makes one think whether the retailer is selling genuine perfume?

Unfortunately, not all consumers have that fine sense to know the difference between a fake or an original perfume.

As a consumer you may never really know, until you experience the actual fragrance which may be close to but not exactly as it should be. It is widely written that original perfume should last at least 2-3 hours or more when you wear it. Fakes will only last less than 1 hour.

How can you identify whether the perfume is original or fake?

- What does it cost? If the price seems too low, chances are that the perfume is fake
- Original perfume will have high quality bottles, you can know this by the smooth and fine surface while fake perfume is a bit rough and contoured. Quality perfume bottles have tight fitting caps that are spill-proof and the brand name printed on the bottle is normally embossed and can't be easily erased.
- Look at the packaging. Are there any misspellings? If you have got an old box, take it with you for a comparison
- How does the product smell? Spray some on a piece of paper, then go away and see how long the fragrance lasts. If it lasts long then you can make the purchase
- Check for clarity. Authentic perfume is always clear, without sediment or unusual discoloration.
- Shake the bottle to see if the perfume is original. For, original perfume, the bubbles that appear when you shake the bottle should disappear in a span of approximately 10-20 seconds. However, fake perfume's bubbles will immediately disappear after you shake it
- The imitations of branded perfumes also come with no cellophane wrapping or the wrapping is not perfect. Original perfume should have its plastic cellophane wrap neatly around the box
- Look for the barcode on the packaging. The barcode must be placed on the lowest back portion and not on the sides.

Next time, be vigilant when shopping for perfume.

