

# BRC VOLUNTARY GUIDELINE ON ARTIFICIAL / FAUX FUR



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## INTRODUCTION

The BRC is working with its members alongside [Humane Society International UK](#) (HSI-UK) to develop best practice for retailers in tackling the issue of real fur being used on products instead of artificial fur. There have been instances where this has happened on products being delivered into the UK and sold in the UK market. The following voluntary guideline aims to raise awareness of the issue as well as provide clear information to recognise the difference between real fur and artificial / faux fur for buyers, technical teams, and anyone else working within a retailer.

A vast majority of BRC members have a fur-free policy and have a continued commitment not to sell real animal fur regardless of whether it is permitted by legislation. This guideline aims to bolster retailer's spot checks within their supply chain with regards to artificial / faux fur trims and other small component parts. Retailers will already have systems, policies, and programmes in place (such as risk assessments or audits for new factories) but understanding

where real fur could be used to potentially replace artificial / faux fur is much more complex.

**NB: this guideline will only be using artificial / faux fur as reference; however, there are several different iterations of how to word it including but not limited to faux fur fleece, plush, faux fur borg, and more.**

BRC members are working collaboratively together and with HSI-UK to show how the retail sector is being proactive and that individual retailers will have robust procedures in place to tackle this issue. This guideline supports this by recognising the importance of clear labelling of artificial / faux fur components.

**NB: It is important to note that this guideline refers to all products with artificial / faux fur components and not just on garments or accessories.**

## BACKGROUND

Following several journalistic investigations in 2017, fur which was intended to be artificial / faux has been found to be real animal fur. Retailers who operate a fur-free policy in store and online had asked suppliers for artificial / faux fur and were dismayed to find out that they had been misled. Over 70% of the UK public is opposed to real fur on moral and ethical grounds especially following the ban on fur farming in the UK in 2000 and retailers are doing their part to provide the consumer with artificial / faux fur alternatives.

Most notably and perhaps contrary to popular belief, real fur can be cheaper than artificial / faux fur. This is what led several retailers to unintentionally receive real animal fur rather than the artificial / faux fur they had requested.

This BRC Voluntary Guideline aims to help retailers by providing clear guidance to recognise the differences between real and artificial / faux fur and to take steps to mitigate the risk.

## EXISTING LABELLING REGULATIONS

The relevant labelling regulations for both real fur and artificial / faux fur on garments and products are:

- EU Regulation No 1007/2011 (on textile fibre names and related labelling and marking of the fibre composition of textile products); and
- Which enacts UK Textile Products (Labelling and Fibre Composition) Regulations 2012 requiring the labelling of real animal fur, and other non-textile parts of animal origin, components.

Under EU Regulation, the label or marking of products containing such parts, shall be indicated using the phrase "Contains non-textile parts of animal origin" whenever they are made available on the market. The use of the phrase "contains non-textile parts of animal origin" does not require a detailed description of particular materials or parts, businesses are free to disclose more details about the materials used (e.g. cowhide, lambskin, etc.) as long as this information is not false or misleading. However, the disclosure of the additional information may not replace the mandatory phrase 'Contains non-textile parts of animal origin'.

Under UK regulation, the labelling or marking referred to in paragraph 1 shall not be compulsory for textile components when the following two conditions are fulfilled: (a) those components are not main linings; and (b) those components represent less than 30 % of the total weight of the textile product. The UK legislation is the statutory instrument adopting the EU Regulation 1007/2011 in to UK law – both include reference to Article 12 requiring the wording non-textile parts of animal origin.

## ACTION: RECOMMENDED LABELLING

The BRC and its members recommend greater clarity of the above labelling regulations on all products by ensuring all fur components are clearly labelled (including but not limited to fur trim on coats, pom-poms on hats and shoes, toys, key rings, hair accessories etc.). One example of which could be "artificial / faux fur trim on hood: 100% acrylic" as this leaves no room for other interpretation and gives the consumer the most amount of information.

The other benefit to labelling all component parts (regardless of whether it is real fur or artificial / faux fur) is that it can potentially close the loop of instances where real fur is coming onto the UK market. If all **fur** is labelled, then all component parts will need to go through robust due diligence checks and be less of a risk of being unknowingly substituted.

# HOW TO SPOT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN REAL FUR AND ARTIFICIAL / FAUX FUR

The BRC and its members believe in transparent and clear labelling of all products and strive to give consumers the ability to distinguish between real and artificial / faux fur.

The end goal is that all consumers should be able to both conveniently and easily discern what they are buying from the label. For consumers and retailers, there are 3 reliable ways to 'spot check' whether it is real fur or artificial / faux fur.



**How to tell the difference between Real and Faux Fur**

**Check the fur tips**  
Real fur tapers to a point at the end (unless sheared). Faux fur tips are blunt.

**Check the fur base**  
Part the hairs at the base. Faux fur is attached to woven fabric. The base of real fur is an animal's skin (leather).

**The burn test**  
If you already own the item, safely cut and burn a few hairs. Real animal fur singes and smells like burnt human hair. Faux fur melts and smells like burnt plastic.

**If in doubt, don't buy it!**

**HUMANE SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL**  
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\*To note: the ends could be cut off the real fur as mentioned in the diagram and would be harder to discern the difference. Fur tips are also not easy to check without a magnifier for the finer fibres in lighter colours.

\*To note: some burn tests can be difficult to determine whether it is real fur or artificial / faux fur since both can shrink away from the flame and burn quite similarly. Some retailers have used special cameras which give a close-up image to see how regular the fibre shapes and ends. If this is a resource available to use, this can be a clearer check when the backings are not visible.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN SOURCING ARTIFICIAL / FAUX FUR:

Considerations for how retailers can ensure products are correctly labelled and component materials are clearly, and accurately described:

QUESTIONS TO ASK	AVOID	GOOD	BETTER	BEST
<b>Have you specifically asked your supplier for artificial / faux fur?</b>	Avoid using the word 'fur' on its own as there could be room for interpretation	Ensure you ask for artificial, faux or fake fur	Use specific material names such as mod-acrylic or polyester when describing the artificial / faux fur you intend to source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alongside the specific materials you are sourcing for artificial / faux fur, also send through the above guide to suppliers to help them identify the difference between real fur and artificial / faux fur</li> <li>Set up workshops, webinars, or visit suppliers in person to help them discern between real fur and artificial / faux fur and enforce your policy</li> </ul>
<b>Do you ensure that every factory / supplier knows about your fur-free policies?</b>	Avoid missing audits of factories and supplier bases	Send every factory or supplier base a copy of your fur-free / animal welfare policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rank each of your factories and supplier bases in terms of compliance</li> <li>Have a RAG (red-amber-green) system where you can work closely to monitor the red</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alongside the specific materials you are sourcing for artificial / faux fur, also send through the above guide to suppliers to help them identify the difference between real fur and artificial / faux fur</li> <li>Set up workshops, webinars, or visit suppliers in person to help them discern between real fur and artificial / faux fur and enforce your policy</li> </ul>
<b>Do you implement an appropriate frequency of inspection for bulk materials as well as delivered products to check whether the products being received comply you're your fur-free policy?</b>	Avoid missing inspections or checks when changing suppliers			<p>Implement a consistent schedule for inspections and checks within your supply chain for artificial / faux fur.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trim testing can be conducted every 12 months or when the trim, fabric supplier, or source changes.</li> <li>Include mandatory testing of all products where fur is present and also quality control and instore spot checks.</li> <li>Implement ongoing checks for continuity lines</li> </ul>
<b>Do you check that your products are clearly labelled for all component parts?</b>	<p>Avoid using product descriptions and labels that are open to interpretation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For example, 100% acrylic on a hat with an artificial / faux fur bobble</li> <li>For example, 'fur trim' on a jacket with an artificial / faux fur trim</li> </ul>			<p>Use product descriptions and labels that explicitly say what each component part is made from</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For example, on a hat with bobble or pom-pom: "Hat: 100% acrylic; pom-pom: 100% mod- acrylic"</li> <li>For example, on a jacket with an artificial / faux fur trim: "Jacket: 100% polyester; faux fur trim on hood: 100% polyester or Jacket 100% polyester: faux fur trim 100% polyester."</li> </ul>

## GOING FORWARD

BRC members recognise their duty of care to their customers, and their responsibility in selling products that are labelled correctly to help the customer make informed purchases and will continue to work collaboratively across the retail sector and with campaign organisations such as HSI-UK.

BRC, on behalf of its members, will continue to push for both the UK and European governments to make changes to the labelling regulations to help establish a level playing field for all retailers. Additionally, BRC will stay up-to-date on this evolving issue as more information comes forward.

For more information, please contact [info@brc.org.uk](mailto:info@brc.org.uk) to learn more about BRC and the member groups that are working to tackle this issue.

## SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Aldi

Amazon

Asda

ASOS

House of Fraser

Humane Society International UK

Kingfisher

Next

New Look

Shop Direct

Tesco

TJX Europe

V 01: APRIL 2018

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