



Member of the FM Global Group

January 18, 2010

Product Alert

Type of Notification: Counterfeit Valves

FM Approvals has been made aware of the discovery of two counterfeit valves manufactured to resemble the products described below:

Company Identity: Giacomini
Name: Giacomini SpA
Address: Strada Per Alzo 39, 28017
S Maurizio d'Opaglio, Italy
Contact information: Mr. Paola Frattini, Paola.Frattini@giacomini.com

Product Identity

Description: Angle Hose Valves
Make/Model: A155, 1.5" and 2.5"
Nameplate data: "GIACOMINI ITALY"
FM Approval status: FM Approved

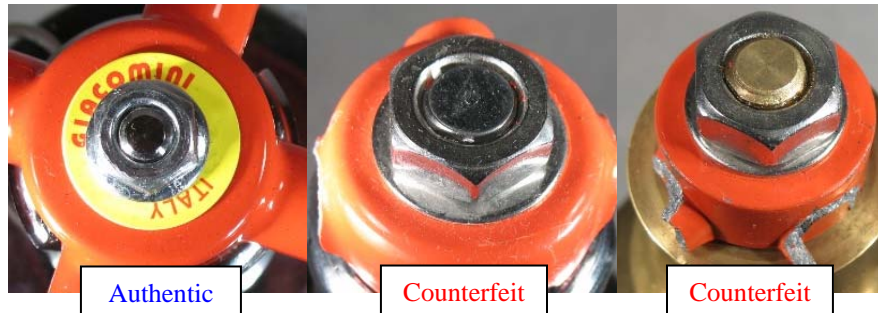
Hazard Involved: The products in question are angle hose valves used to initiate and cease water flow to hose lines for manual firefighting operations. The valve stem is equipped with a mechanical device that can limit how far the valve is opened and reduce the flow pressure to the hose line. The counterfeit products bear the FM Approvals certification mark, but have never been tested. Safety concerns of untested angle hose valves include but are not limited to the strength of the valve body and valve stem, the leak resistance of the valve seat and the leak resistance of the stem seal. Further specific concerns with the models examined include an ineffective pressure reducing device and unsecured valve seat nuts.

If you suspect you are in possession of a counterfeit A155 angle hose valve bearing the FM Approvals certification mark, please bring that to the attention of:

Thomas G. McCarty
FM Approvals, Quality Department
Norwood, MA, USA
+1 (1)781 255 4802
Email: Thomas.mccarty@fmapprovals.com

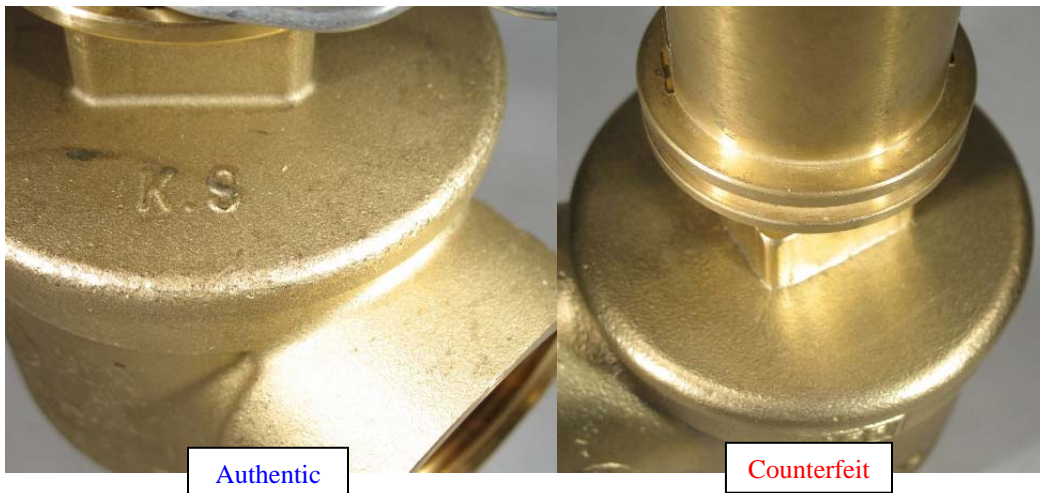
The Figures below highlight some of the telltale indicators of the counterfeit valves.

Figure 1



To the left in the above figure is the stem nut and name plate of the authentic Giacomini A155 valve. A flanged nut is used for the stem nut and the name plate reads "GIACOMINI ITALY." To the middle and right are counterfeit valves. The stem nuts are not flanged and a separate washer is used under the nut. A name plate is not used in the counterfeit versions. Giacomini uses a 1/2" size stem nut, while a 17 mm and a 19 mm nut were found on the counterfeit valves.

Figure 2



The above photographs show the date code applied to the bonnet of the authentic A155 (right). Neither counterfeit valve had a date code on the bonnet or anywhere else on the valve body.

Figure 3

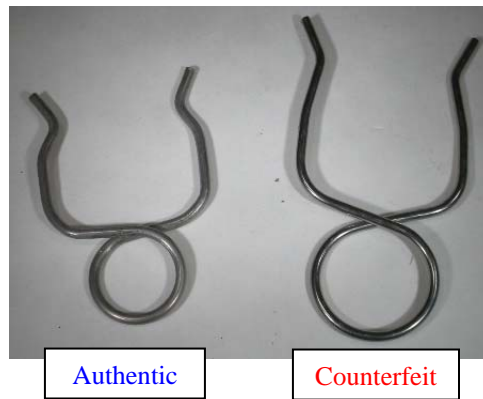


Figure 3 above shows the authentic stem cover brake next to the brake found on the counterfeit valve. The authentic brake is smaller but made from thicker gauge wire. The difference in design is not inconsequential as seen below in Figure 4.

Figure 4

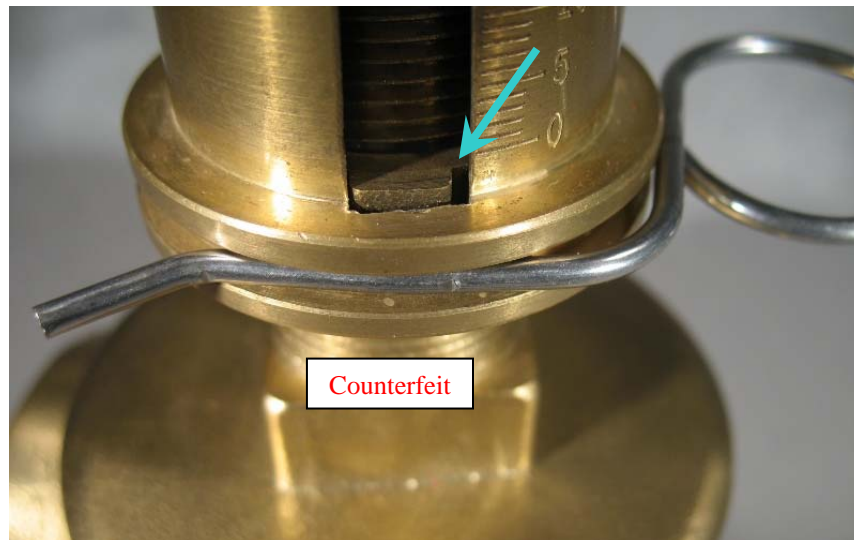


Figure 4 above shows the counterfeit brake inserted into the channel of the counterfeit valve stem cap. The valve stem cap is affixed to the stem, while the stop block indicated by the blue arrow is affixed to an extension of the bonnet and hence remains stationary as the valve is opened and the valve stem moves upward. There are two slots cut into clip channel on the stem cap which allow the brake to impact the bottom of the stop block as the valve is opened and the stem, stem cap and clip move upward, thus providing a stop and producing a throttling effect. As shown in Figure 4, because of the poor design of the brake, when the brake is inserted fully it does not impact the stop block allowing the valve to be opened past its set point. If this valve were to be used in its capacity as a pressure reducing device, this flaw could allow for excessive water pressure to be delivered to the hose line.

Figure 5



Figure 5 above shows the body of the authentic 1-1/2" A155 in plain brass on the left and the counterfeit 1-1/2" A155 on the right. The counterfeit is marked as a model "A55" which is incorrect, as an authentic model A55 is not equipped with the pressure reducing hardware on the valve stem but the counterfeit version is equipped with such hardware. Additionally, the authentic valve body has casting marks that include the words "PRESSURE REDUCING DEVICE," the pressure rating "175" and an arrow on the outlet indicating the direction of flow. The counterfeit valve body is instead marked with "ITALY" above the Giacomini logo, the words "FIRE HOSE VALVE" and the pressure rating "300" below it and it also lacks the flow direction indication on the outlet. There are other visual differences in the color and finish of the brass and some of the casting details around the outlet, inlet, as well as the overall dimensions of the valve body.

Figure 6



Figure 6 (previous page) shows the reverse side of the valve bodies of those shown in Figure 5. The counterfeit valve lacks the “ITALY” marking on this side that the authentic valve has. The UL® control number is incorrect on the counterfeit valve and it also lacks the flow direction arrow that is included on the authentic casting. The physical differences in the casting beyond the markings are consistent with those seen in Figure 5 as well.

Figure 7

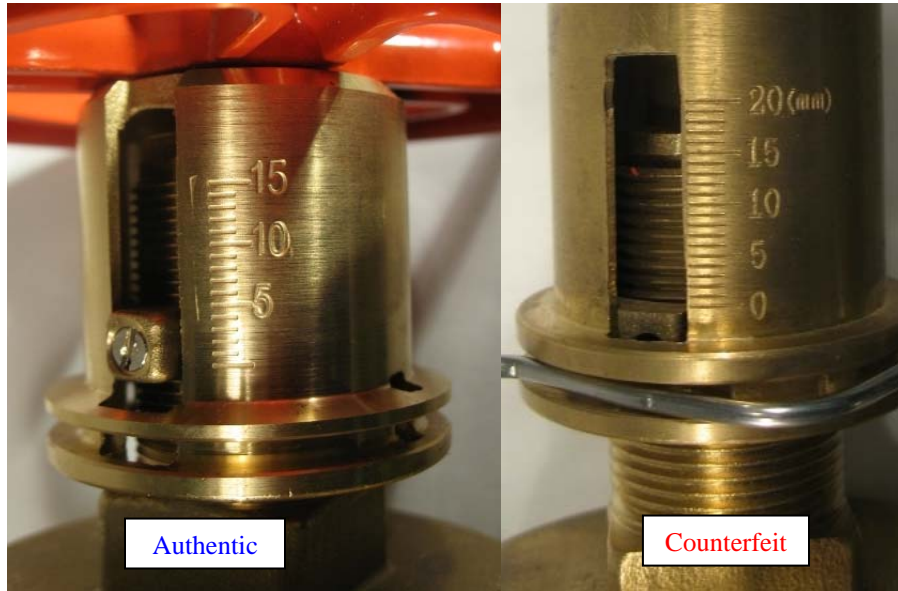


Figure 7 above shows the differences in the markings on the valve stem caps on the 1-1/2” model. The authentic version on the left is marked from 0 to 15 without any indication of ‘unit’. The counterfeit valve has a stamping indicating units of “mm” and the scale is from 0 to 20.

Figure 8

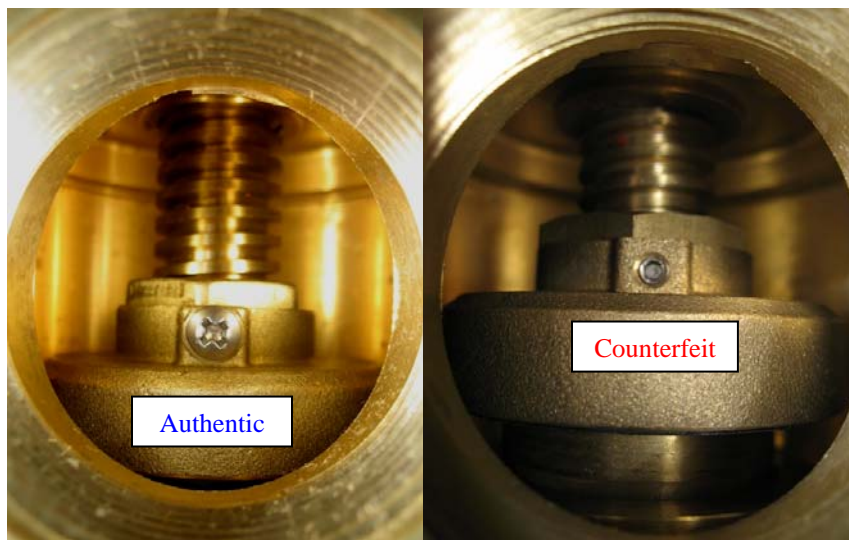


Figure 8 above shows the seat washer set screws on the authentic 1-1/2” valve and on the counterfeit 1-1/2” valve. The authentic set screw is a pan head Phillips type, while a headless Allen socket type screw is used in the counterfeit.

Figure 9



Figure 9 above shows the markings on the valve bodies of the authentic and counterfeit 2 1/2" A155 valves. The only difference between the two is that the Giacomini logo is missing from the counterfeit valve.

Figure 10



Figure 10 above shows the markings on the opposite side of the valve body as those in Figure 9. The counterfeit valve on the right has the word "PULSOR" where the UL® mark and the word "ITALY" is found on the authentic version. The markings are otherwise similar.

Figure 11

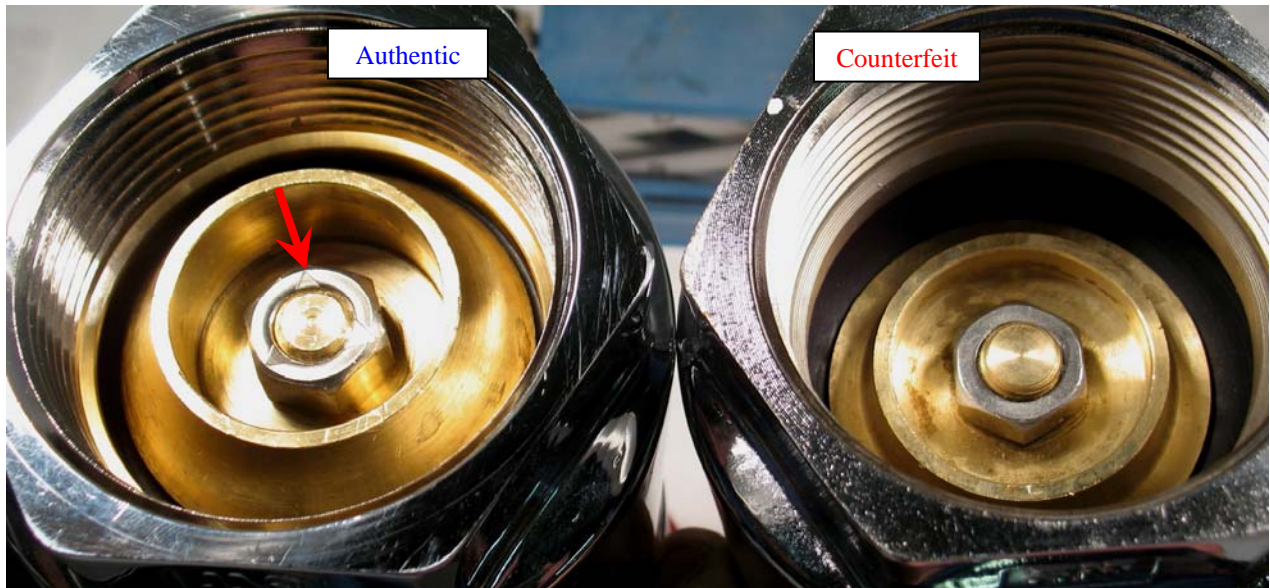


Figure 11 above shows the difference in the valve seats of the authentic and counterfeit 2-1/2" valves. The authentic valve seat extends further than the counterfeit seat. Also of note are the three marks on the nut of the authentic valve which are not present on the counterfeit version. These detent marks, indicated by the red arrow, help affix the nut to the valve stem to prevent the nut from backing off in service. It is unknown whether the nut on the counterfeit valve has any means of securing it from turning and subsequently falling from the stem while in service. The nut on the authentic 1 1/2" valve is shown below left, and also has detent marks on it. The nut on the counterfeit 1 1/2" valve does not.

Figure 12

