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The star online

A MORE effective and specific product recall system, similar to the one in Europe, is needed to better protect consumers from faulty and potentially dangerous products.

Malaysian Association of Standards Users technical policy (product safety) executive Nur Asyikin Aminuddin says such a system is important to help consumers identify which products to avoid.

The system should also be easy for consumers to refer to by having a user-friendly product recall list uploaded online, she says.

Nur Asyikin adds that the European Commission's Rapid Alert System enables information about dangerous products found in the market to be exchanged among countries in the region.

The European Commission also updates a list of alerts on products reported by national authorities every week.

The association wants such a product recall system because it is very important when it comes to product safety.

If a product has a problem in terms of its safety or functions, there will be a market recall until such items are safe enough for the consumer, she says.

She urges consumers to report unsafe incidents through the Apec (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) Product Safety Incident Information Sharing System's website at [psiiss.net](http://psiiss.net).

The Domestic Trade, Co-operatives and Consumerism Ministry says it developed an online product recall system last year through its MyStandard portal at [mystandard.kpdnkk.gov.my](http://mystandard.kpdnkk.gov.my).

Using this portal, local manufacturers, importers or suppliers of any goods may voluntarily report product recalls to the ministry and their recall notice will be published for public viewing, says a ministry spokesperson.

The ministry advises consumers to lodge a complaint with its enforcement division if they encounter counterfeit products in the domestic market.

National Consumer Complaints Centre (NCCC) legal and policy executive Shabana Naseer Ahmad says there has been an increase in the number of complaints about general consumer products, including digital devices.

Many complainants were not aware the handphones and other electronic products purchased were not genuine and some found they were secondhand products.

Only when problems occurred and they had it checked at the service centre or repair shop did they realise that the items were not genuine, she says, adding that there have also been complaints of batteries overheating or their cases bulging.

According to the NCCC's 2014 Annual Consumer Complaints Report, there was a rise in the number of complaints regarding electronics and telecommunication products. Of the 6,318 complaints lodged in 2014 about general products, some 1,807 were concerning these gadgets – an increase from the 26.9% recorded in 2013.

Among the complaints received were that brand new mobile phones could not be charged or cameras that did not work.

Shabana advises consumers to demand for a refund or replacement of faulty products, as it is their right to do so.

If merchants refuse to comply with the request, complaints can be lodged with the Consumer Claims Tribunal, the Domestic Trade, Co-operatives and Consumerism Ministry or the NCCC at [nccc.org.my](http://nccc.org.my), she says.