



Issue 26: Grey Market and Counterfeit Bearings

Grey Market and Counterfeit Bearings

In specifying a bearing for an application the end user will provide all known detail to the bearing engineer. The engineer will review the application and make a professional decision on a final bearing specification. In many cases samples or prototypes will be tested for verification and validation.

The engineer expects that the bearing will be manufactured to their specifications along with meeting or exceeding bearing standards such as ABMA (American Bearing Manufacturing Association) standards.

Key Questions:

1. Can you guarantee grey market bearings will meet original manufacturers' specifications?
2. Will the manufacturer warranty grey market bearings if problems occur?
3. Do counterfeit bearings meet ABMA standards?
4. Does anyone warranty counterfeit bearings?

What is the risk?

Let's define grey and counterfeit bearings:

Grey Market Bearings: Bearings that are sold through distribution channels that are legal, but are not official, authorized, or intended by the original manufacturer.

Counterfeit Bearings: Bearings that are fake replicas of the real product used to take advantage of the superior value of the imitated product.

Just by understanding the definitions we find that the answer to all four questions is a resounding, "NO!"

Not Worth the Risk!

We'll start with counterfeit. If the price is too good to be true....you might want to question your distributor! A bearing failure can cause physical damage to equipment or people, never worth the risk of liability.



Pic 1: Schaeffler (FAG) counterfeit seizure

Although grey market bearings are not counterfeit there could be aspects that are not pointed out by the nomenclature. There could be material, precision, clearance, grease, dimensions, and more that differ from standard. These differences could cause premature bearing failure.



Pic 2: SKF destroys 15 tons of counterfeit bearings

Know your Distributor:

The best way to ensure you are not buying grey market or counterfeit product...Know your Distributor:

- Does your distributor procure directly from the manufacturer? **(Factory Authorized)**
- Is your product packaged as received from the manufacturer?
- Is your product backed by the manufacturer's warranty, sales and engineering group?
- Is your product eligible for analysis with written report provided by the manufacturer?

Conclusion:

If you're using Midpoint Bearing, the answer to all the above questions is YES. This is also our promise to all our partners! If you have any questions, comments, ideas for future topics please feel free to contact me directly at bud@midpointbearing.com.



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