

Grand Lodge Fraternal Order of Police

Founded in 1915, The Fraternal Order of Police ("FOP") is the world's largest organization of sworn law enforcement officers, with more than 327,000 members in more than 2,100 lodges. The FOP is committed to improving the working conditions of law enforcement officers and the safety of those we serve through education, legislation, information, community involvement, and employee representation. On a national level, the FOP is headed by the Grand Lodge Fraternal Order of Police. State and local Lodges operate under the authority of the Grand Lodge. The Grand Lodge Fraternal Order of Police is a non-profit corporation. For more information about the Grand Lodge, and for links to State and Local Lodges, visit www.fop.net.

FOP Intellectual Property

Even if an FOP item is not prohibited under eBay's prohibited items policy, it may still be protected by the FOP's intellectual property rights. The Grand Lodge owns the name, insignia, emblem, trademarks and service marks of the FOP. These include, without limitation, the words "FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE," and the letters "FOP," both of which are federally registered trademarks owned by the Grand Lodge. Many are familiar with the five-sided star logo or emblem associated with the FOP. This emblem and the accompanying phrase "FOP JUS FIDUS LIBERTATUM" are also federally registered trademarks owned by the Grand Lodge.

Trademark infringement is a violation of federal law. The FOP takes seriously its responsibility to protect and police its marks. This includes preventing the sale of unauthorized items that infringe upon our trademarks. Since 1915, the FOP has worked diligently to develop its reputation and goodwill, both in the law enforcement community and the public at large. As a result, the FOP works hard to prevent dilution of its trademarks, and will pursue all available legal remedies to protect its marks.

When people create and sell items bearing the marks that belong to the Grand Lodge, they violate the Grand Lodge's rights to its federally registered trademarks. Moreover, they deprive of law enforcement officers, including those who keep your community safe, an opportunity to make the FOP an even better organization by way of legitimate uses of FOP marks. Therefore, the FOP will promptly seek the removal of any item listed on eBay which appears to infringe upon the FOP's intellectual property rights.

Frequently Asked Questions

From time to time, eBay auctions listing FOP items for sale are removed. Following are answers to some frequently asked questions regarding the removal of such actions.

Q. Why was my auction removed?

A. Your auction was removed because (1) it violates eBay's prohibited items policy; and/or (2) we consider the item that you were selling to be an unauthorized use of FOP trademarks or other intellectual property. The unauthorized use of FOP trademarks or other intellectual property is a violation of the FOP's rights under applicable trademark laws.

Q. Why hasn't the FOP removed all auctions selling FOP products?

A. Not all FOP related items sold on eBay are prohibited under eBay's policy, and not all FOP items constitute an intellectual property infringement. It is legal to re-sell an authorized FOP item that you purchased, so long as the item does not violate eBay policy.

Q. But my auction said "For Collector Purposes Only," doesn't that make it okay?

A. No. If your auction was removed for violation of eBay's prohibited items policy, please note eBay's policy makes no exceptions for items purportedly sold for collecting only. If your item was removed for intellectual property reasons, please note that the unauthorized use of the FOP's intellectual property is not made legal by a disclaimer of "For Collector Purposes Only" or similar language. An infringement is an infringement, regardless of the ultimate use of the item.

Q. What if I didn't realize I was violating eBay policy or infringing upon the FOP's rights?

A. eBay requires that all items comply with eBay's prohibited items policy. In addition, ignorance is not a defense under trademark law. You are responsible for confirming that your sales do not infringe upon the rights of others.

Q. I purchased an item from someone else, why can't I re-sell it?

A. Prohibited or infringing items are sometimes purchased by innocent buyers. Even though you may not have known of the problem when you purchased your item, eBay's prohibited items policy and the FOP's intellectual property rights must be enforced.