



Intellectual
Property
Office



British Embassy
Beijing



UK Trade
& Investment



China-Britain
Business Council
英中贸易协会

Intellectual Property & Trade Events in China

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information provided is accurate, however we accept no responsibility for any errors, omissions or misleading statements in this factsheet. This information is written in general terms and should be used as a guide only. It should not be used as a substitute for professional advice.

Participating in trade fairs, exhibitions and missions can be an effective way to access the Chinese market. However, trade events can also expose businesses to risks. British companies traveling to China for trade missions should take precautions to protect their intellectual property (IP) and familiarise themselves with mechanisms to take action against infringing companies and individuals.

Protect IP before you go

IP rights are typically territorial. Registered IP rights in the UK, EU, Hong Kong or elsewhere will not provide effective protection in Mainland China. Before travelling to China companies should apply for Chinese IP rights related to their products and services. Ideally, the registration process should be completed before travelling, especially if the rights may need to be enforced. However, simply starting the application process can give some protection, for example against bad-faith applications.

Bad-faith, pre-emptive trade mark applications – including “trade mark squatting” – are the most common IP issue raised by British companies in China. Bad-faith applicants sometimes use exhibitions and mission events to select targets. The most effective way to prevent trade mark squatting is to apply for Chinese trade mark protection as early as possible. Pre-emptive trade mark applications are most common in consumer retail industries, but can affect all sectors.

IP enforcement strategies at trade fairs in China

Most trade fairs in China will have an on-site IP office, which can issue a formal notification of infringement and remove infringing items from stalls. Documentation required to make a complaint will usually include a certificate of IP registration and proof of payment of any renewal fees; proof of identity of the IP owner and the complainant (and relevant power-of-attorney); and details of the infringement. Preparation will often include translation/notarisation of overseas documents.

In many cases the IP office of a trade fair will not be able to take effective action, for example due to limited time and disputes over the validity of IP rights. An alternative strategy is to use a trade fair to gather evidence for future administrative or legal action. Strategy should be formulated and implemented with advice from a qualified, experienced legal professional.

Further Information

The [EU SME IPR Helpdesk](#) covers trade fair IP protection in publications, online FAQs and e-learning modules. More information – including other factsheets – can be found on the [Embassy IP webpage](#).

To arrange a discussion of a particular case based on our experience working with other companies in China please contact commercialmail.beijing@fco.gov.uk.