

2008 News Releases

U.S. EPA fines Southern California technology company \$208,000 for “nano coating” pesticide claims on computer peripherals

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IOGEAR made unverified claims that coating on keyboard and mouse accessories would eliminate pathogens and kill bacteria

SAN FRANCISCO – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has settled with ATEN Technology, Inc., of Irvine, Calif., acting for its subsidiary IOGEAR, for selling unregistered pesticides and making unproven claims about their effectiveness.

EPA maintains that IOGEAR made unsubstantiated public health claims regarding unregistered products, and their ability to control germs and pathogens -- a violation of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act.



“We’re seeing far too many unregistered products that assert unsubstantiated antimicrobial properties,” said Katherine Taylor, associate director of the Communities and Ecosystems Division in EPA’s Pacific Southwest region. “Whether the claim involves use of an existing material such as silver, or new nano technology, the EPA takes these unverified public health claims very seriously. Consumers should always follow common-sense hygiene practices, like washing hands frequently and thoroughly.”

This is an example of an unregistered product that asserts unsubstantiated antimicrobial properties.

IOGEAR products at issue were: wireless laser mouse with nano shield coating, laser travel mouse with nano coating technology, and wireless RF keyboard and mouse combinations. After being contacted by EPA, IOGEAR stopped making claims that their computer peripherals protect against germs.

Products that kill or repel bacteria or germs are considered pesticides, and must be registered with the EPA prior to distribution or sale. The Agency will not register a pesticide until it has been tested to show that it will not pose an unreasonable risk when used according to the directions. Consumers should be careful to look for the EPA registration number printed on product labels, and to follow the directions for safe use.

This enforcement action was based on a tip, and ensuing inspection conducted by the California Department of Pesticide Regulation.

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