
In Chuvashia, family gang to stand trial for selling fatal fake alcohol



In the course of investigation into death of three men in November 2015 who had been poisoned with methanol from a bottle labeled Bacardi, investigators of the Chuvashia Office of the Investigative Committee revealed a family business. According to the investigators there were 8 people in the gang, including Dmitry Mitrokhin, his father, mother, girlfriend and friends who involved three more people in different periods of time. Depending on the role of each one, they are charged with crimes under Part 3 of Article 238, Part 3 of Article 30, Part 2, items “a” and “b” of Article 171, part 6, items “a” and “b” of Article 171.1, part 3 of Article 180 and Part 3 of Article 327.1 of the RF Penal Code (storage and selling of goods and products that do not meet safety standards involving death of two or more people by negligence; attempted illegal business, illegal circulation of unlabeled alcohol products, illegal use of goods identification means, selling of forged documentary stamps and federal special stamps to label alcohol products).

The core of the gang bought a wide range of fake alcohol they at a warehouse owned by FOOD

CITY located just outside Moscow, disguised it as real elite alcohol and sold it in the towns of Cheboksary and Alatyr, settlements in Cheboksary District and other places. The investigators found out that the goods had been brought in the region in a sealed truck in the guise of certified alcohol with forged accompanying forms. The alcohol then was sold at a fabulous low price – between 50 and 120 rubles for a liter of alcohol for which the perpetrators had devised a special story. The alcohol had allegedly been produced following all technological standards on legal plants, but had been taken out unofficially. According to forensic inquiries, most of the bottles confiscated, which is 53 thousand, had forged documentary stamps on them, while the contents of those bottles were fatal: main components being methanol, acetone, isoamyl alcohol in concentration exceeding ethanol concentration many times, as well as other toxic trace contaminants. The accused tried to make more than 15 million rubles and caused considerable damage to trademarks rightholders.

The case contains 98 files. The investigators ran 26 searches, confiscated drafts that suggested that the gang had run bookkeeping, five vehicles used to transport the goods. More than 150 forensic chemical, food, technical, medical, dactylographic, phonographic, computer technical, complex material and psychiatric examinations were run. More than 200 people were questioned as injured parties, witnesses and expert witnesses. Documents and objects relevant for the investigation were confiscated.

During the probe, the investigators cooperated with offices of the Investigative Committee for Moscow, Kursk and Orenburg Regions which are investigating similar cases. By now the investigators of the Chuvashia Office of the Investigative Committee have managed to find out the circumstances under which fake alcohol had been leaked into the region and main points where it was sold, they also broke up the channel of supply and identified people who had sold fake alcohol to the gang. The criminal case against those dealers was severed to form a separate lawsuit. A court arrested property of the accused worth more than 15 million rubles.

At present, the investigators have enough evidence so the case with the signed indictment has been referred to court.

The investigators managed to prevent similar tragedies from happening when they had opened the case immediately, identified and detained people involved in selling fake alcohol in Chuvashia, organized a phone hot line.

On the New Year's Eve the Investigative Committee is appealing to citizens if not to abstain from, then at least to be vigilant when you buy alcohol. Looking at the statistics of fake alcohol poisoning, we can say that the peak of poisoning usually comes when the demand is high during the period of time around this holiday. In the similar period of time last year – between October 2015 and March 2016 – at least 39 instances of fatal poisoning were registered in criminal cases investigated by the Investigative Committee. Bottles with fake alcohol had labels of most marketable goods: rum Bacardi Black, Bacardi Superior, Jack Daniles whiskey and popular Russian (Dagestani) cognacs.

To prevent such cases, the Investigative Committee closely cooperates with the Federal Alcohol Market Regulation Service to discover illegal fake alcohol production businesses. The Alcohol Market Regulation Service gives investigative authorities know if they have found producers of dangerous alcohol. Investigative authorities send there an investigator who orders necessary inquiries. In the first place, specialists check the quality and composition of the product on being potentially harmful to human life and health. If harmful substances are found, then a decision is to be made in accordance with the current legislation – up to criminal proceedings. This way the Investigative Committee is involved not only in investigation of alcohol poisoning deaths, but is now committed to prevent them.

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