

Understanding Customs Recordations in Tanzania:

What Brand Owners
Should Know.





Introduction

Customs recordation is the formal registration of a trademark with the Fair Competition Commission. It enables border agents to identify, detain, and facilitate the seizure of goods suspected of infringing registered intellectual property rights.

Customs Recordation is governed by **The Merchandise Marks (Recordation) Regulations, 2025**

There are several things that Brand owners should know:

- ✓ Customs recordation is a border enforcement tool, not a substitute for comprehensive IP strategy. It operates alongside and not instead of trademark registration, civil litigation, and market surveillance programmes
- ✓ Recordation is a powerful and cost-effective way to enforce intellectual property rights. When done properly, customs recordation is one of the most affordable and effective tools for brand owners in Tanzania to protect their products.
- ✓ A recordation application will not succeed without a valid, subsisting IP registration. Expired or invalidated marks cannot support a recordation.
- ✓ Customs recordation facilitates the interception of goods but does not, on its own, resolve the underlying IP dispute. Civil proceedings or criminal referral may be necessary to achieve final relief.
- ✓ Once an application for recordation is done, Coverage extends to all designated ports of entry into Tanzania, including; sea, air, and land borders, where customs officers are on duty.

Conclusion

- It is important for brand owner to understand that there is no single tool that provides complete brand protection. However, Customs recordation is most effective when integrated with registration, litigation readiness, and trade surveillance.
- Filing the recordation applications is step one and maintaining a response-ready local presence ensures the right holder can capitalise on any detention notification
- The Tanzanian IP enforcement landscape continues to evolve, therefore engaging practitioners experienced in both IP law and customs procedure is essential for effective implementation.



For more information please
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