

Spotting Fake Xbox 360 Controllers

I've never actually had hands on experience with a fake/knockoff controller, so everything I say below is from reading and watching youtube videos. Considering I've had to look at so many legitimate controllers to make the full list guide, it's easy for me to tell them apart since I know all the variations in my head.

This guide will hopefully provide help to those that don't have much experience with what legit 360 controllers look like. Also, if looking to see what a specific controller should look like, remember to go to the full list controller guide doc, or go to the Homepage of my controller website to see the full controller table list and then click on the controller you need. I've done my best to provide pics of every angle and describe every part on the controller so that everyone knows the exact original parts the controller should have. Sometimes people like to modify their legits, it's not always easy to know or remember what original parts the controller had, even for me.

Table of Contents:

Package Differences:
- Wired Packaging:
- Wireless Packaging:

Controller itself Differences:
- Wired Controllers:
- Wireless Controllers:

Thumbsticks:

Spotting Fake/knockoff battery shells:

Fake Wireless Receivers for PC/Windows:

Package Differences:

Wired controller packaging is easier to spot than wireless. Some fake packaging can look pretty legit, so I tend to ignore the font and text unless it's super obvious like not saying Xbox 360 anywhere on the front. My method is more about looking for certain key points to hit when figuring out if it's legit or not.

I also won't go through every type of packaging as they can be found on the individual controllers themselves. But looking for the key points provided should be enough to know if it's real or fake even if the package type isn't below.

Wired Packaging:

Wired fake packaging is the easiest to spot by one simple trick. Fakes/unofficials have a wide, U like opening where the wire is on the top of the controller, and the plastic lining on the inside will be a lighter color. The real/official boxes have a V shaped opening for the wire and on the For Windows packaging, the inner plastic lining will be dark grey.

You can also look at the shade of green on the box, or perhaps the font as sometimes those can be wildly off. But I find looking at the wire opening to be the fastest and easiest thing to look for. The only time it can fail is if it's not sealed, and someone placed a fake inside an official packaging. So be sure to look for on the listing if they claim it's sealed. If they claim an open box, but have no pictures of the controller by itself, I'd msg for more pics or pass on buying.

Legit Console packaging: Has that more V shaped opening for the wire. All official controllers will have a matching serial sticker on the bottom or back of the packaging.


XBOX 360
CONTROLLER
MANETTE
CONTROL
CREATED BY
XBOX
Microsoft



Legit For Windows packaging: Has that more V shaped opening for the wire. Also has darker grey inner plastic.



Fake Console packaging: Notice the wider opening for the wire.


XBOX 360
CONTROLLER
控制器
컨트롤러
CREATED BY XBOX



Fake For Windows packaging: Still has the wide U like opening for the wire, and I've noticed the fake packaging also has a white/lighter grey inner plastic.



Obvious fake packaging: Just based on the color of the controller in the box it is in. There was never a white wired in cardboard packaging, and you can see the guide button being shiny.



Wireless Packaging:

I've noticed a pattern in the battery area. Fakes tend to have them face to the left, whereas all officials should have them facing to the right. I will give examples below to help. I have seen fakes still having 'duracell' branded batteries inside, so that won't be the easy tell.
If there is a close up enough pic, you can also possibly see the parallel dots, which is also a big giveaway of it being fake.
Legit Console packaging: Has duracell batteries facing to the right. If no batteries are inside and claiming to be sealed and no mention of the batteries being taken out to prevent leaks. Be extra cautious as some fakes don't include them.
All official controllers will have a matching serial sticker on the bottom or back of the packaging.


XBOX 360
DURACELL
Wireless Controller
Manette Sans Fil
Control Inalámbrico
Controle Sem Fio



Fake Console packaging: If batteries face to the left as seen below, more than likely going to be an unofficial controller.
Also, more than likely the serial on the controller won't match the box. Or if it does, it's most likely not unique in any way. It's a bit harder to tell if you only bought one. But it should always be a unique 14 digit serial.


XBOX 360
DURACELL
Wireless Controller
Manette Sans Fil
Control Inalámbrico
Controle Sem Fio



Obvious Fake packing: Seeing a shiny guide button on a white/grey controller. MS never officially did this, so it's either been modified, or not legit.


XBOX 360
Wireless Controller
無線控制器
무선 컨트롤러

Controller itself Differences:

The one consistent thing I've found between both types of controllers is the serial sticker having round edges. Official serial stickers are much more squared off in comparison. There are many ways to see if it's fake or real, but not all are super easy to spot.

Using a fake really wouldn't be an issue if they were more durable. The more important issue is that the thumbsticks don't actually tend to be analog. Basically many knockoff thumbsticks are only 8 ways or even as bad as a 4 way, which means it's like a d-pad. Either it's in that direction or not, no in between or full range when needing to move precisely. This obviously would make it impossible to play many if not all games. In the cases where the analog sensor is proper, they then just tend to fail within weeks or months.

Wired Controllers:

Real Wired: Will have a breakaway section at the end, and will always have a ferrite shield bulge near the top of the cord where it connects to the controller.
In the case of the White wired, it never had a shiny guide button, or any other color of thumbsticks other than grey.



In the case of a black controller, it will always have the breakaway section with no ferrite bulge at the end. But will always have the ferrite bulge at the top of the cord near where it connects to the controller.



Fake Wired: You might notice the fake also looks cheaper. But the main giveaway is no breakaway section at the end and it's missing the ferrite shielding bulge near the top of the controller.
The white fakes tend to have a shiny guide button, and some of them are even more obvious where it's missing the green X logo part.



I've never seen a fake wired with a breakaway at the end, so if there are pictures of the controller by itself, this should be the first thing to look at as sometimes the rest of the controller isn't so easy if you aren't experienced with knowing what the real ones look like.



Legit Back:
Official black wireds have the part number X854237-001, -003.
The big back sticker will always be black with white text like seen below. The sticker layout does change in 2013 or so.
For the most part, I look for the non-rounded corners on the serial sticker, and if it has the right part number for the controller type. Can also use the hologram sticker as fakes don't really bother to get it right.



Fake Back: Sometimes it will be rather easy to spot the sticker differences, but there are some fake wired controllers that have close to the same stickers. The then obvious parts will be the serial font being rather big on a fake and the sticker itself has rounded corners.
The part number below shows x81616-006, which while still a wired part number, but it is for the white/grey wired controllers only. And the big back sticker is a yellow-ish tint to it. All black controllers only have a full black sticker with white font.



Real hologram: You can also look at this sticker on the back to help tell authenticity. The real hologram will change words based on the angle you are looking at it, Microsoft and Xbox 360.



Fake hologram: Fakes never seem to have a working one, not sure why, maybes it's an added expense. But if you don't see the text changing depending on the angle, it's going to be a fake. It can also be seen as a dull/not very reflective silver.



A lot of fakes will have a guide button with no xbox logo on it. The was an early prototype controller that had a white guide button, but it will say Krypton on the back sticker and is marked as a prototype in the back as well.
So minus the rare circumstance, if it doesn't have the official non-shiny or shiny silver guide button. It's safe to say it's not going to be legit or has been modified.
Notice the solid silver guide, no green X on it.

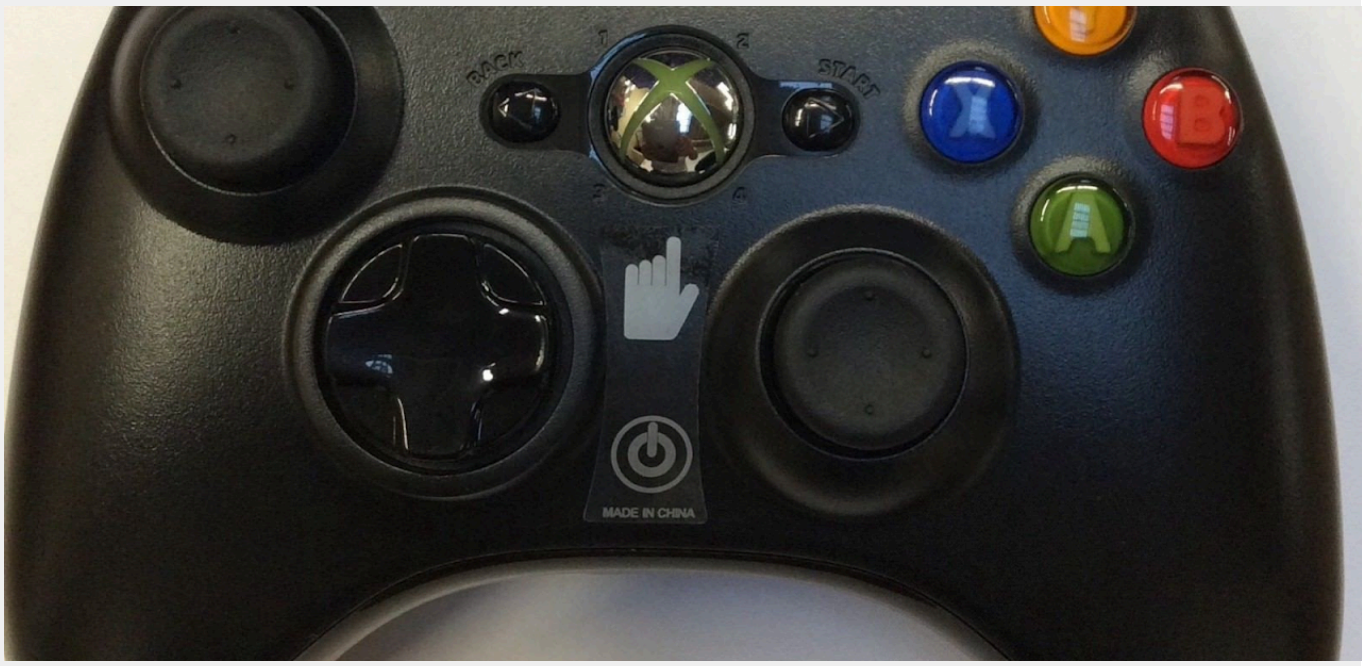


This one has a more transparent green, which while cool, again, is not a legit styled guide.



Wireless Controllers:

Fake Wireless: *Unsure on this have seen some Australian controllers with white stickers. Meaning they'd be MSK. So maybe only white sticker if it's a MSK controller(has MSK on the back sticker). Fakes like to put on a white text/ink front sticker on the controller. While Microsoft does put front stickers on their controllers(typically only when it came with a console), it was all black text/ink.


BACK
START
MADE IN CHINA



More Obvious Fake Wireless:
Technically the red is the closest to what real reds were like. But no red ever had a shiny guide. The blue and green aren't the same shade as the reals, and also they never had black accents.



Real Wireless back: This is a MSK-1403 controller, so this back sticker won't look familiar unless you are from Australia/Asia region. However, using it for consistency in the comparison.
The most reliable way to tell if it's real is the font and the serial sticker not having very round edges. Wireless fakes are much better done, so it won't be as easy as wired.



Fake Wireless back: These are a lot more well done compared to fake wired controllers. The sticker layouts are almost exact. But the font will always look and be a bit different.
The serial sticker has very round edges, so this is the place I would look at first. Some fakes won't have the correct part number for the type of wireless. But as seen in this example, it's dead on for a MSK-1403 controller.



Thumbsticks:

Not all fakes will do parallel, but if it's a claimed new, sealed controller with the thumbstick nubs layed out parallel, it's a fake. Otherwise, some people could have just put knockoff sticks on a used, official controller. Also unsure if parallels have been on both wireless and wired controllers, have mainly seen them on wireless.

New/Official thumbsticks: Will have cross/diamond style nub dots that look like the below. In cases where used, the dots do rub off easily, so this method is easier to tell when fully new.

.

. .

.



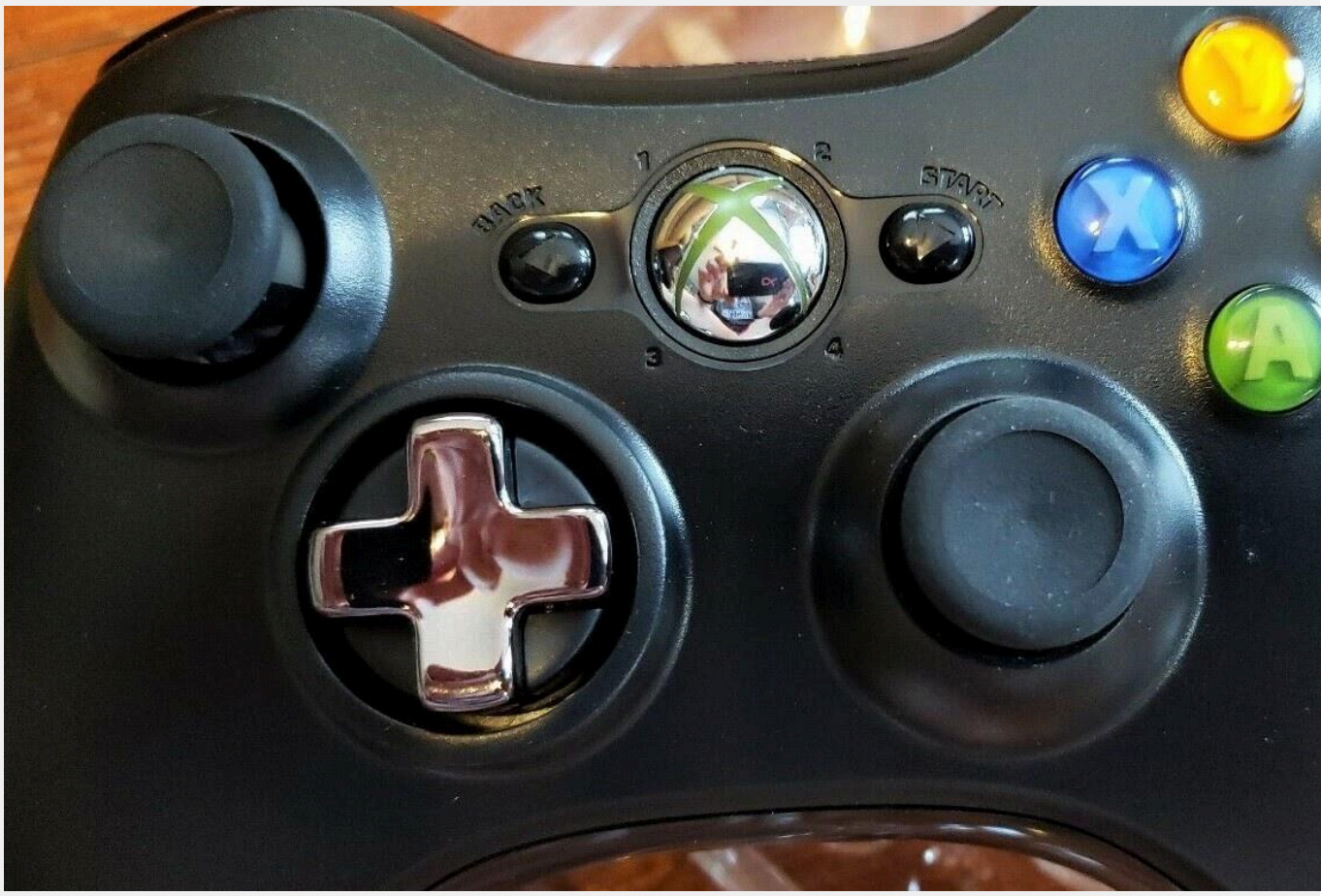
Fakes: At least some can have parallel/square like nub dots on the thumbsticks. Sometimes a legit controller can end up with these kinds of sticks since they are very easy to replace, and the cheap ones from china often end up being these kinds. But if claiming to be a new controller, and has this, I'd stay away from buying.

. .

. .



Concave thumbsticks: There are some officials that also have concave thumbsticks that have no more nubs. Not sure if any fakes would have the same style, but Microsoft added these types on many controllers post 2010 starting with the silver controller. Concave thumbstick controllers will also always have the silver transforming d-pad, so something to look for when seeing these kinds of sticks.



Spotting Fake/knockoff battery shells:

Knockoffs do work, but won't always have a 100% connection depending on the controller. All fakes have a glossy or no sticker, while the real ones have a matte finish(no shine) sticker.
Real on the left, fake on the right:





If you can't see the sticker, sometimes you can spot a little bit of horizontal ribbing on the plastic, it may be hard to see in pics/under specific lighting. But if there are any lines on the backside, it's most likely not official. Official red on the left, fake on the right. Little hard to tell, but you should be able to spot some horizontal lines near the upper-center.

If you have your hands on it, when releasing it from the top, the controller should turn off. Where as the knockoffs seem to keep the connection and you have to pull the battery pack out further. Not 100% sure how reliable it is, but all the fakes I've used have that in common as I like to turn off 360 controllers by pulling the battery pack out a bit.

Real on the left, fake on the right:



Fake Wireless Receivers for PC/Windows:

The real ones always have ‘Microsoft’ written on the front. Fake receivers either have ‘X360’(as seen in a below example), completely blank, or may even say the full ‘Xbox 360’ on it.

The only official colors were White and Black. You may find some fakes to be in other colors such as: pink, blue, red, etc. While cool, they will never be legit. Fake receivers aren't too bad as they can work like the real ones do, but I've read they can be problematic. Either have to manually install a driver through small work arounds, or in the case of a random Win10 build, it makes the device unrecognizable no matter what you do. Fake receivers can also die faster/not last as long.

Fakes are easier to find online, and definitely cheaper. Personally, I've only ever used the real ones, and find it the best way to be using a 360 controller on pc.

Real on the left, fake on the right:



Official White: Has the “Microsoft” logo on the front.



All white adapters should have the hologram sticker as seen in example:



Variations to the official backings to the black wireless receiver:
2008-2010: Early black receivers have a hologram sticker on the back. However, in 2011, they stopped putting them on. So not a reliable way to know the authenticity, but can help date which era it's from.



2011 backing: No more hologram sticker.



2013 Backing change: Still no hologram, and now removed the big Microsoft logo.

