

E-Shopping: Are You Protected?

Shopping on the Internet has become convenient, quick and easy. With a quick click of the mouse, you have unlimited choices and can order anything you want from practically anywhere in the world right in the comfort of your home. It's convenient and the bonus is that it is delivered right to your doorstep.

But Buyer Beware! Shopping online can have it many pitfalls. There are several things you must consider before wandering off into cyberspace shopping. Here is a checklist to help you remember.

- Does the business you're buying from deal with international e-commerce?
- Does the website clearly disclose information?
- What kind of business is it and what does it sell?
- Where is it located, can you contact them and does it have a physical location?
- Are there any restrictions or limitations on the sale?
- Is there any opportunity for you to print or save a record of the transaction?
- Are there safe guards for protecting your payment information when it is transmitted online?
- Is there an opportunity for you not to have information collected about yourself?
- What is the return policy?
- Does the warranty apply to merchandise sold outside of the vendor's country?
- How much added cost will be attached to each items' price once shipping and customs duties are factored in?
- What protection do you have if the items do not arrive or if they are damaged in transport?
- What assurance do you have of the quality and fitness of the product you are ordering?

If consumers have any problems with merchandise obtained from abroad through shopping on the Internet, the Department of Consumer Affairs can only provide assistance in putting them in contact with a Consumer Affairs Bureau in the country or state from which the merchandise was obtained.



CONSUMER AFFAIRS

"Promoting Confident Consumers and Responsible Traders"