

CONSUMER AWARENESS GUIDELINES

Be an Alert Consumer !
Also be a Responsible Consumer !!

Issued by
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A. WHO IS A CONSUMER?

A "consumer" is a person who buys any goods or hires any service for valuable consideration (including deferred payment). The term does not include a person who obtains goods or services for resale or for any commercial purpose. However, persons who avail goods or services exclusively for the purpose of earning their livelihood by means of self employment are considered as 'consumers'.



B. CONSUMER RIGHTS

Rights 1 to 6 are directly guaranteed under the Consumer Protection Act 1986 while Rights 7&8 are implied under the Constitution of India.

1. Right to safety

Right to be protected against marketing of goods or services which are hazardous to life and property.

2. Right to information

Right to be informed about the quality, quantity, potency, purity, standard and price of goods or services as the case may be, so as to protect the consumer against unfair trade practices.

3. Right to choose

Right to be assured, wherever possible, access to a variety of goods and services at competitive prices.

4. Right to be heard

Right to be heard and to be assured that consumer's interest will receive due consideration at appropriate fora.

5. Right to redressal

Right to seek redressal against Unfair Trade Practices or Restrictive Trade Practices or unscrupulous exploitation of consumers.

6. Right to consumer education

Right to acquire knowledge and skills needed for taking action to influence factors which affect consumer decisions.

7. Right to Healthy Environment

The right to physical environment that will enhance the quality of life. It includes protection against environmental dangers over which the individual has no control. It acknowledges the need to protect and improve the environment for present and future generations.

8. Right to basic needs

Right to basic needs ensures basic goods and services which guarantee survival. It includes adequate food, clothing, shelter, health care, education and sanitation to lead a decent life.

C. RESPONSIBILITIES OF CONSUMERS

1. BEFORE BUYING

- ***Planning in advance***
- ***Enquiring past performance of product / service***
- ***Enquiring about reputation and past performance of producer / seller / service provider***



2. WHILE BUYING

- ***Asking for demonstration regarding how to operate / use the product/service***
- ***Enquiring about after-sales service and ensuring availability, phone number, address and e.mail of service center***
- ***Reading and knowing the contents of guarantee / warranty card***
- ***Insisting for approved sale bill with serial number, address, phone number, etc.***
- ***Obtaining guarantee / warranty card and getting it signed/sealed by dealer***

3. AFTER BUYING

- ***Using products as per instruction given in user manual***
- ***Keeping bills and guarantee card safely***
- ***In case of fault inform dealer and service center. Do not meddle or repair yourself***
- ***Keeping record for all correspondences***
- ***Seek immediate redressal of deficiency in product***

D. CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT, 1986

The Act envisages a three tier quasi judicial system. They are known as (i) District Consumer Disputes Redressal Forum (ii) State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission and (iii) National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission

a. Features of Consumer Protection Act, 1986 and filing of complaints

- 1.Simple formalities**
- 2.Advocates not compulsory**
- 3.Consumers themselves can conduct cases**
- 4.Complaints may be sent even through Registered Post**
- 5.Registered Consumer Organisations or Government can also file complaint on behalf of consumer(s)**
- 6.Less expensive**
- 7.Compensation can be claimed for the loss suffered including mental agony**

Protection offered by Consumer Protection Act, 1986 against:



- a.Deficiency in product or service**
- b.Poor aftersales service**
- c.Damage/Loss to health, life and property due to product**
- d.Hazards arising out of product/service**
- e.Unjust enrichment through unfair means**
- f.Misleading advertisements**
- g.Unfair Trade Practices**
- h.Restrictive Trade Practices (like tie-up sales)**
- i.Violations of any other applicable laws or regulations**

b. Grievance Redressal

- Consumer should send a detailed petition to the dealer / service provider through registered post pointing out the defect / deficiency and details regarding relief sought for**
- Copy of the petition with postal acknowledgement card to be preserved**
- If the dealer / service provider not responded in time consumer may approach District Consumer Protection Council headed by District Collector (for districts other than Chennai) or Commissioner of Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection (in Chennai) or Reputed Consumer Organisation who will be**

sending notices to the dealer / service provider on behalf of consumer

•If no remedy available through all above agencies, then relevant Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission / Forum as the case may be approached to file a complaint against dealer / service provider

E. POINTS FOR CONSUMER ATTENTION

a)PURCHASING UNDER PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

Public Distribution System Outlets (ration shops) are distributing commodities against family cards at subsidized rates. Consumer should ensure that

- Commodities are provided in correct weight without denial*
- Display board is placed in front of every shop indicating available commodities and their quantity with selling price of each product*
- Samples of commodities are placed for notice of card holders*
- In the absence of any of above complaint can be made to Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection Department, Government of Tamil Nadu*
- Can make an online complaint at www.consumer.tn.gov.in*



b) PURCHASE OF COSMETICS

While buying cosmetics consumer should

- Not be carried away through Colorful misleading advertisements*
- Check manufacturing date and date of expiry*
- keep in mind that Colours are almost Chemicals*
- keep in mind that following statements are mostly false "100% Natural", "Chemicals not used", "Oil free"*
- Consult other users*
 - If you have any grievance/complaint, you may file it with the Local Drug Inspector or with the Controller of Drugs, 259/261 Anna Salai, Chennai 600 006, phone 044 24321830 or in the web at www.tnhealth.org*





c) PURCHASE OF DRUGS

- **Purchase to be made only as per prescription by Registered Medical Practitioner - Self medication is dangerous**
- **Checking for manufacturing date / expiry date**
- **Checking name of medicine purchased with prescription**
- **Checking availability of Maximum Retail Price on the strips / containers**
- **Insisting for bill with details of batch number etc. printed over strips / containers**
- **Checking for dosage and perseverance details of medicines**
- **If you have any grievance/complaint, you may file it with the Local Drug Inspector or with the Controller of Drugs at 259/261 Anna Salai, Chennai 600 006 phone 044 24321830 or in the web at www.tnhealth.org**

d) PURCHASE OF CLOTHS

- **Checking whether cloths withstand normal washing habits**
- **Insisting and obtaining bills and preserving them**
- **Insisting for "silk mark" while purchasing costly silk sarees**
- **If you have any grievance you may send a notice to the seller/manufacturer or file a petition in the District Consumer Forum**

e) PURCHASE OF GOLD

- **Checking for "Hall Mark"**
- **Weight of stones to be separately noted down in bills while purchasing ornaments with precious stones**
- **Obtaining purchase bills and keeping it safely**
- **In case of grievances you may issue a notice to the seller or file a complaint with Bureau of Indian Standards at www.bis.org.in**

f) MISLEADING ADVERTISEMENTS

Consumer should always

- **be alert about the advertisements while going for purchase of goods afresh or in exchange of old product**
- **not be carried away by statements like free offers / discounts etc. since they are not the deciding factors for the requirement of consumers**
- **not be misled through colourful glamorous advertisements**

•In case of grievances, please issue a notice to the newspaper or complain to Advertisement Standards Council of India (ASCI) at 219, Bombay Market, Tardeo Road, Mumbai 400 034, ph 23521066 / 23516863, Web: www.ascionline.org and Email: ascia@vsnl.com

g) PURCHASE OF FOOD PRODUCTS

- Don't buy spoilt products. It is dangerous to health**
- Check manufacturing and expiry date, weight, manufacturer address etc.**
- If perishables, check if it has been stored in freezer/cold storage properly.**
- Avoid cheap and colourful food with hazardous colour additives**
- Avoid products without manufacturer address. You have no recourse in case of any problem**
- Avoid purchase of unbranded products like oil without sealed packs**



In case of any complaint, including adulteration, call up your Local Food Inspector or Joint Director (PFA) at 359 Anna Salai, DMS Complex, Teynampet Chennai 600 006, phone 044-24335075 /24334811/ 24334818 Web at www.tnhealth.org.

F. PACKAGED COMMODITIES

Every packed commodity has to carry the following information

- Name and address of packer / manufacturer**
- Name of commodity**
- Net quantity / Weight**
- Month and year of packing and expiry date**
- Maximum Retail selling price**
- Quality assurance symbols like AGMARK, FPO, ISI etc.**
- Other relevant information (regarding ingredients of product)**

G.SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION



•Every alert consumer has a duty to be a responsible consumer too. This means:

❖Consume only what one needs. Remember the poor and underprivileged

❖Don't waste products/service, natural resources. Someone else may badly need it

❖Avoid polluting products such as plastics, chemicals. Instead, use environmentally friendly degradable materials such as cloth, jute bags/ materials

❖Help keeping the environment safe and healthy. Recycle degradable waste in Your house

•Remember the 3 Rs of a dutiful consumer

➤Reduce: Consume only what you need, if possible reduce consumption of water, electricity, fuel and other non-renewables

➤Reuse: If a product can serve you for a longer period, use it instead of buying a new one .

➤Recycle: Don't litter the environment, please recycle degradable or recyclable materials through scrap dealers



H. OUR CONSUMER PROTECTION ACTIVITIES

- ***Establishment of Citizen Consumer Clubs in every educational institution***
- ***Providing consumer education to rural masses through Women Self Help Groups / Panchayat Level Federations and through Residents Welfare Associations / Apartment Owners Associations in Urban areas***
- ***Generating awareness through sectoral work shops / seminars***
- ***Publication and distribution of monthly magazine under the caption "Tamil Nadu Nugarvor Kavasam"***
- ***Propagating consumer awareness messages through Radio / Television Media and short video films***

With the motive of developing Citizen as "Valuable Consumer" various consumer organisations are serving together with Government of Tamil Nadu in providing consumer education to general public.

for more details on
**CONSUMER PROTECTION &
AWARENESS
LOG ON
www.consumer.tn.gov.in**