

Returns Made Easier



Returning items can be a time consuming and stressful process, especially during the holiday season. Following the Consumer Protection Board's (CPB) tips can make the experience a little easier and may save you money.

Understand the refund policy: Merchants are required to post their return/refund policy in a conspicuous location. Take note of the time period allowed for requesting refunds, what products are covered by the refund policy and what are excluded. Exclusions may include items such as custom clothing and closeout merchandise among others. Finally, make sure you understand the manner in which the refund will be issued, e.g., as cash, a credit to your credit card account or in some other manner.

Take note of restocking fees: Ask a sales representative about whether any restocking fees will be deducted from your refund.

Retain and organize receipts: It is important to keep verification of the purchase to show the merchant that the item was indeed purchased from their establishment. If you do not have a purchase or gift receipt, you may be unable to return the item or you might have to settle for a store credit for the price of the item at the time of the return rather than at the time of purchase.

Avoid opening the item: Avoid opening the packaging of an item you intend to return.

Repackage the merchandise: Pack up the merchandise with any accessories as well as with the manufacturer's instructions and warranty card in an appropriate fashion if you opened the item. It is preferable to use the original packaging.

Check out online returns: Read carefully the return policy for online merchants. Some online merchants require purchasers to first obtain authorization and a tracking number before returning the item. Review the instructions to ensure that your return will be handled properly. Make sure you have the correct shipping address and determine whether you will be reimbursed for your shipping costs. Use the recommended shipping method. Inquire with customer service as to whether you can return the item in person to a store.

Delay in sending in rebates: Determine that the merchandise is in good working order and that you will be keeping the product BEFORE dismantling the product packaging for the product code necessary to secure a rebate on an appliance, electronic item or other product and prior to completing the rebate form. Be sure to make this determination within the time period for the refund.

Take time in sending in warranty cards: Decide whether you want to keep the product BEFORE completing and forwarding any warranty card.

Make sure you get credit: Understand when your refund/store credit will be processed and when it will be credited to your account.

Exchange instead: Some merchants do not offer a refund, but will exchange the item purchased. Be aware that some merchants may reserve the right to refund the purchase instead of exchanging the item if the products are offered in limited quantity.