



‘Tis the Season for Returns

Release Date: November 13, 2018

Media Contact: Jerad Albracht, 608-224-5007
Bill Cosh, Communications Director, 608-224-5020

MADISON – Even the most heartfelt presents sometimes end up back on the store shelves. Maybe the color was wrong. Perhaps the fit was not quite right. There can be any number of reasons why an item needs to be returned, and planning ahead for this possibility can be a great help to a gift recipient.

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection asks shoppers to pay close attention to the different stores’ policies while they shop, to ask for gift receipts at the register, and to keep all sales documentation throughout the holiday season.

“Different businesses have different return and exchange policies, and it is important to ask about a store’s policies before you make a purchase,” said Michelle Reinen, Director of the Bureau of Consumer Protection.

Some stores will not honor a return or refund request without a receipt, so it is important to ask for gift receipts at the time of purchase and to include them with the package. Drop the gift receipt in the box or tape it to the front or side of the box before you wrap the item.

Additional return tips include:

- Stores are required to honor the return guidelines they represent to consumers. If the store’s policy is not posted, ask a salesperson or manager about the terms before making a purchase.
- Pay attention to the time frame allotted by the retailer for returns. Find out if the countdown to the last day for returns begins on the date of original purchase of the item or if there are extended holiday return deadlines.
- As you wrap gifts, leave the price tags and UPC codes intact and keep the original packaging. Some stores charge a restocking fee for opened items or those without their packaging (especially electronics).
- Review the conditions that apply when you buy products on sale or clearance. Some stores may not allow you to return these items.
- If you are shopping online or by phone, find out who pays return shipping fees if you have a problem with the product. Does the retailer pay those fees or does the consumer? Are return shipping fees deducted from the refund amount?
- Gift cards may not be eligible for returns, so check the store’s policy before you purchase one.

If you believe a retailer is not honoring its posted return policy, file a complaint with the Consumer Protection Bureau at datcp.wi.gov, send an e-mail to datcp hotline@wi.gov or call the Consumer Protection Hotline toll-free at 1-800-422-7128.

Connect with us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/wiconsumer or Twitter: [@wiconsumer](https://twitter.com/wiconsumer).

###