



Holiday Promotions Can Ad Up to Confusion

Release Date: November 15, 2016

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

MADISON – *Doorbusters! Black Friday Savings! Cyber Monday! Special Buy!*

Holiday advertisements are full of breathless promotions of special sales and offers. But the devil is in the details. There are limitations and they tend to be relegated to the fine print:

Quantities limited. No rain checks or substitutes. One day only. While supplies last. Additional discounts do not apply. After rebate. Limit one of each item per customer.

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) asks shoppers to pay close attention to the sales stipulations in this season’s online and print ads.

“Ads set high expectations for holiday deals, but shoppers could walk away disappointed if they have not familiarized themselves with each retailer’s unique sales policies,” said Frank Frassetto, Division Administrator for Trade and Consumer Protection. “As you search fliers and online promotions, make it a habit to read and understand the fine print.”

Retailers’ hours of business, item quantities, and return policies can all differ from normal operation and have additional constraints during holiday special events. Some discounts are only offered in store while others may require the use of a retailer’s website or app.

Other simple tips to remember when you are shopping for deals this holiday season include:

- Keep ads available and take note of any special prices while you shop online or in store.
- Some one day deals may require tickets that you receive at the front door of the store and these tickets may be limited.
- A store’s price match policies may not apply to sale items listed in holiday ads.
- Make sure you understand return/refund/exchange policies before you buy. Retailers may have alternative policies in place for holiday sales, and online purchases may not necessarily be eligible for in-store returns. Keep your receipts.
- Remember to pick up or print off a gift receipt for the gift recipient.
- Be aware that clearance and “open items” may have different return policies or not be returnable at all.

Wisconsin law requires stores to charge their lowest advertised price for a product and to refund any overcharge, so it is important for consumers to keep an eye on the prices at the register or in the online shopping cart. Special pricing may only apply to specific products, so be sure that you have the correct item and model name or number before you start to checkout. Speak up if you believe that an item did not register at its advertised price.

If you are charged the wrong price on an item and the business will not correct the error, file a complaint with DATCP’s Weights and Measures Bureau, visit datcp.wi.gov, send an e-mail to datcpweightsandmeasures@wi.gov or call 608-224-4942.

Connect with us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/wiconsumer.

###