



DATCP Provides Consumer Tips for the Holidays

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MADISON, Wis. – With the holiday season fast approaching, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) encourages consumers to shop wisely. Black Friday remains one of the most popular occasions for sales and shopping in the United States, but holiday sales have already begun. Consumers should remember these tips to protect their wallets and their private data while shopping.

- **Review a vendor’s policies** for returns, exchanges, and shipping and handling before buying. If this is not readily available, ask customer service.
- **Take note of safety information, especially for toys and other gifts for children.** Look for age-grading and safety verification labels from Underwriters Laboratories (UL) and the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM). Check for recalled toys at the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission’s website: CPSC.gov.
- **Remember sellers must honor the lowest posted price for an item.** Double check that items are priced correctly during checkout. Politely ask your cashier or customer service representative to fix any errors.

When shopping in-store:

- **Know if sale prices apply** only to limited hours, models, colors, etc. before shopping. Sales may be ‘door-busters’ or subject to other limitations. Read the fine print.
- **Check for tampering before purchasing a gift card.** Make sure protective stickers are intact and the PINs are not exposed. Use gift cards quickly, as they may expire or be subject to inactivity fees.
- **Make sure a QR code is legitimate** and has not been tampered with by stickers, and is not a phishing attempt before scanning it. Real businesses do use QR codes; however, scammers can create them too.

When shopping online:

- **Avoid using public Wi-Fi to make transactions.** Scammers could be monitoring it for personal payment information.
- **Do not allow untrusted cookies.** Cookies are data saved to your device used by legitimate companies for advertising, and by scammers to track your online activity.
- **Always ensure a website is legitimate** before entering any private data. Do not trust a site based solely on its appearance – check that its web address is accurate and not merely being mimicked before entering any personal or payment information.

For additional information and consumer protection resources or to file a complaint, visit DATCP’s Consumer Protection webpage at ConsumerProtection.wi.gov. If you have questions or believe you are a victim of a scam, report it by contacting DATCP’s Consumer Protection Hotline by phone at (800) 422-7128 or email at DATCPHotline@wi.gov.

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