

Consumer Rights & Responsibilities



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CONSUMER RIGHTS

There are certain basic Rights to which all consumers are entitled, but unless we know what these Rights are, we could find ourselves being cheated out of them. They are as follows:

The Right to the Satisfaction of Basic Needs

Consumers should be provided with the opportunity to access basic goods and services that facilitate survival: adequate food, clothing, shelter, health care, education and sanitation.

The Right To Safety (Protection from Hazardous Products &Processes)

We have a right to safety and, therefore, the right to be protected against those goods and services that may be hazardous to our lives and health. The right to safety has been broadened to include the concern for consumers' long-term interests, not only our immediate desires.

The Right To Information (The Facts Needed to Make Informed Choices)

We are entitled to all the facts needed to make informed choices and decisions. The right to be informed also goes beyond avoiding deception and protection against misleading advertisement, labeling or other practices, to include information about warranties, the proper care and use of products and access to redress (refund, repair, replacement).

The Right To Choose

We have the right to access a variety of products and services at competitive prices and, in the case of monopolies, to have an assurance of satisfactory quality and service

The Right To Be Heard

We have the right to be represented so that our interests receive full and sympathetic consideration in the formulation and execution of social and economic policies and systems of governance.

The Right To Redress (Fair settlement of Just Claims)

We are entitled to fair settlements of just claims. It involves the right to receive compensation for misrepresentation of shoddy goods or services and, where needed, free legal aid. An accepted form of redress for small claims should be available.

The Right To Consumer Education

We have the right to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to make us informed consumers. The right to consumer education incorporates the right to acquire the knowledge and skills needed for taking action to influence factors that affect consumer decisions.

The Right To Live in a Healthy & Sustainable Environment

We have the right to a physical environment that will enhance our quality of life. This right involves protection against environmental problems over which an individual has no control. It acknowledges the need to protect and improve the environment for present and future generations.



CONSUMER RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to these rights, consumers should be aware of the following responsibilities:

Critical Awareness

The responsibility to be alert and question the use, care, price and quality of goods and services we use.

Action

The responsibility to assert ourselves and so act to ensure that we get a fair deal. As long as we remain passive consumers, we will continue to be exploited.

Social Concern

The responsibility to be aware of the impact of our consumption on other citizens, especially disadvantaged or powerless groups, whether in local, national or international communities.

Protection of Self

As consumers we must take all the necessary steps to protect ourselves. Doing our research about a company and its products as well as, asking for, receiving and retaining our receipts for all purchases are just a few of the steps we should take.

Solidarity

The responsibility to organise together as consumers to develop the strength and influence necessary to promote and protect our interests.

Environmental Awareness

We should recognise our individual and social responsibility to conserve natural resources and protect the earth for future generations.

