

Consumer Alert

Office of Consumer Affairs



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: November 25, 2008

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The County of Summit Office of Consumer Affairs Offers Holiday Shopping Tips

- * Make a shopping list and stick to it. Watch for sale flyers and coupons from stores. Take them with you but make sure you read the sales promotion end date.
- * Check store refund and return policies. Verify if the refund issued is by cash refund, in-store credit or exchange. Ask if there are restocking fees. Many times retailers, especially electronic items have restocking fees associated with them.
- * Be prepared for broken items, wrong sizes or colors, and duplicate gifts. Always save shopping receipts for 90 days after your purchase or ask for "gift receipt."
- * Be careful buying an item which offers a mail-in rebate. While the price for the item, including the rebate, may be a good one, consumers need to read the terms of the rebate carefully. Most offers require you to cut the UPC code off the box which may be difficult to do if the item is a gift.
- * Are you still paying for gifts in January, February or beyond? Check with stores to see if they offer layaway and make a cash budget and stick to it.
- * Buy "safer" toys. With millions of toys being recalled, consumers should ask if the manufacturer of that toy has had any recalls. Some retailers are placing safety boards in their stores with the latest product safety recalls or visit Consumer Product Safety Commission web site <http://www.recalls.gov/index.html>.
- * Keep shopping bags, purses, and wallets close to you. Put your money or credit card back into your wallet or purse after the purchase and put it away. Crumble fresh bills so that they will not stick together when paying. Women, remember to zip shut or close your purse.
- * Carry only a few shopping bags. Return to your vehicle frequently to unload purchases in the trunk and make sure to have your keys in your free hand when approaching your car. Consider moving your car to another parking space.
- * Check your accounts daily for any activity you did not initiate and read all monthly account statements for errors. This is especially needed during the busy holiday shopping season.
- * Think outside the gift box. Plenty of alternatives are less expensive, and more fun. Have family gift exchanges where you purchase only one gift or make and exchange homemade items or be creative by giving coupons for shoveling grandma's driveway.

HAVE A SAFE & WONDERFUL HOLIDAY SHOPPING SEASON



For more information on this or other helpful tips, please contact the County of Summit Office of Consumer Affairs at 330-643-2879, or visit our web site at www.summit.oh.us/conaffairs.htm