



The Consumer Council



Consumer Information Factsheet December 2014

Thanks but no thanks...a guide to returning unwanted gifts and purchases!

None of us wants to seem ungrateful but it's a sure bet we're stuck with one or two Christmas presents this year that we won't use and would be too embarrassed to give to someone else! This factsheet provides guidance on returning those unwanted gifts.

Right to return gifts

If you're at all unsure about a present you've been given, don't throw away the packaging or remove labels because it may look as if you've used the item. New laws mean online traders can deduct money from your refund if it looks as if the item has been used.

High street shops don't have to give a refund unless goods are faulty; don't fit the description or aren't fit for purpose. However, many stores have a 'goodwill' returns policy and will offer you an exchange, credit note or refund.

For presents bought online, you have 14 days to cancel the order and request a refund if the items are not faulty. Many online retailers offer a 30 days return policy, during the Christmas period.

Proof of Purchase

By law, you don't need a receipt to return goods. If the item was bought on a debit or credit card, the statement showing the transaction can act as proof of purchase. However, having a receipt (or a gift receipt) really helps.

For online purchases you will need the order confirmation details and reference numbers.

Tip: Always keep a copy of your online order confirmation safe as it will help with returning goods or if you experience a problem such as goods failing to arrive.





Refunds

For goods bought on the high street it's likely you'll be offered an exchange or credit note instead of a cash refund. This depends on the retailer's returns policy.

Refunds are normally determined by the method goods were paid for. So, if your dear old auntie bought the gift with her debit card, you'll need to admit you don't like the itchy mustard-coloured jumper she bought and have her return it to the shop so the money can be put back on her card.

Restrictions

There are some things you can't return e.g. CDs DVDs and video games can't be refunded if they're no longer sealed. Restrictions also apply to personalised goods such as a T-shirt printed with your favourite holiday snap or perishable goods like a food hamper. Earrings, make-up, lingerie, toiletries and night-wear may also be refused for hygiene reasons, even if unused.

Sale items

You have exactly the same consumer rights with sale items as with non-sale items. In other words, if the item is not as described; not fit for purpose or not of satisfactory quality then depending on the circumstances, you may be entitled to a repair, replacement or refund.

If you return a non-faulty gift without a receipt and the item is in the sale, it's likely you'll only be offered the item's current, cheaper value.

For more information ask for your free copy of Your Guide to Shopping Safely Online and the Consumer Advice Handbook by ringing 0800 121 6022 or go to www.consumer council.org.uk

