

FREE



Leicestershire
County Council



Trading Standards CONSUMER AFFAIRS

February – May 2008

Up-to-date news for Consumers

www.ripofftipoff.net

MOBILITY AIDS BUYING ADVICE

VALIDATE UK AND YHA

Spring Break Blues

Going on a spring break? More of us are taking more than one package holiday in a year, but what do you do if things go wrong on holiday? Many consumers suffer great disappointment and inconvenience if things aren't as expected.

The following tips should help:

- If you have a problem, complain at once to your holiday representative and try to sort things out - don't wait until you get home. Ask the representative for a copy of the completed complaint form, as you may need to provide proof before you can claim compensation.
 - When there is a problem, take photographs or a video to show what is wrong and note names and addresses of other holidaymakers who are aware of the problem. Keep receipts for any extra bills that you have to pay and try to keep a diary of events.
 - When you get home, complain in writing to your travel agent or tour operator straight away. Tell the company what went wrong and send them any facts you have and remember to keep copies of letters/documents.
- If you have a genuine complaint you will be able to claim reasonable compensation. This may include such things as loss of enjoyment, loss of value and 'out of pocket' expenses. If you receive a compensation offer which you feel is not enough, or you are not happy with the response you get to your complaint, you can take action through the courts or through The Association of British Travel Agents' (ABTA) independent arbitration scheme.
 - If an insurance claim is refused, there may be an appeals procedure available. If you have paid by credit card and the cost of the holiday is more than £100 per person, you may have extra protection as the credit card company could also be held liable if you have a legitimate claim.

Holiday Car Parking

When booking holiday parking online follow our advice as a recent court case has highlighted potential problems.

- Keep confirmation documentation; include a print out of the web pages, so you can show what was offered.
- Pay by credit card if over £100 and you can get help from the credit company if you need to.
- Send a letter of complaint to the company if you do not receive the service you paid for.

For further advice and information contact
Consumer Direct on 08454 04 05 06

Rip Off Tip Off

INFORMATION WANTED!

The national 'Rip Off Tip Off' website is to be re-launched in Leicestershire.

The website allows members of the public to report unscrupulous businesses and scams. This can be done easily and in the strictest confidence. It is hoped that this will encourage more people to come forward to report dishonest business practices.

Tell us about:

- Cowboy tradesmen
- Car Clockers (where odometers on cars are turned back to show a lower mileage)
- Problem internet companies
- People selling DVDs/CDs from home or in work places
- People selling alcohol and tobacco from home
- Any other scams or businesses trading unfairly

Visit www.ripofftipoff.net

Remember to give us as much information as you can including business name, personal name, addresses, telephone numbers, where they advertise and what they have been up to!



CONSUMER TIP

Validate UK and YHA

Validate card holders can now join the Youth Hostel Association (YHA) and get a 50% discount. Validate cards are available through your local library and are useful for young people to prove their age. Log onto www.yha.org.uk or call **0870 770 8868** for more details.



Money Troubles?

Are you struggling to pay your bills? Contact Leicestershire Money Advice Service. Confidential advice to help remove your debts – **0844 2480040**.

Mobility Aids Buying Advice

Every year, Trading Standards advise consumers who have had problems with mobility aids and products. Some businesses use high pressure sales tactics and as a result people may be sold expensive products, which they are not physically able to use. This applies especially to the elderly and vulnerable people.

The important things to remember are to choose a reputable supplier and make sure you can trust the business you deal with. Don't be rushed into making a decision and get help and advice if you are unsure. A good business will make sure they sell you a product that will suit your needs.

There are several ways of finding a fair business. Try to choose one which has been personally recommended to you by a friend or relative who has bought from them. Check whether they are a member of a recognised trade association, such as the British Healthcare Trades Association (BHTA). If so, they will have to agree to a Code of Practice covering responsible selling and efficient complaints handling.

We recommend that you contact the trade association to make sure they really are a member.

Mobility Scooters

A lot of people who find it hard to walk will be thinking of buying a mobility scooter, so that they can get out more this summer.

In the past the most suitable scooter was bought from a specialist, chosen following the recommendations of health professionals. Now they're available through classified ads, online auction sites and even market stalls.

Choosing the right type of mobility scooter is particularly important, as there are two types:

- Class 2. Limited to 4mph, use on pavement only, except when crossing the road.
- Class 3. Two speed. Can travel at 8mph on the road but have a switch to restrict them to 4mph for use on the pavement.

Although many will choose the larger, faster class 3 scooters, there are a few extra things to consider.

Class 3 scooters must:

- Have lights, indicators, horn, rear view mirror and rear reflectors.
- Be registered with the DVLA. Although they don't have to display registration plates, they DO have to be licensed in the 'disabled' taxation class and display a tax disc.
- Display a yellow flashing beacon if used on a dual carriageway.

Good retailers of mobility scooters will help you to choose the right scooter and arrange registration for you. If you buy from somewhere that doesn't, guidance on registration is available at http://www.dvla.gov.uk/vehicles/invalid_vehicles.aspx



Product Recalls

Unless otherwise stated return item to the retailer for a replacement or refund.

Boys' Denim Dungaree and Rugby Top Set, M&S
T88/07977/5506 4714200, 4714217, 4714194, 4714170
& 4714187 on sale since July 2007. £16 and £18.

Glitter Nightlight Lamp sold at Petrol Stations, model no: 1422.

Mothercare 3-in-1 Convertible Car Walker, style no. F2740 and F2739. Tel: 08453 304030.

Nicky Clarke Straightener, model no. NCS70. Only date codes commencing 07 and ending 01 through to 34 are affected. Tel. 0800 587 2405.

Children in Need pens, ASDA price £1. Barcode 5051413051795. Tel. 0500 100 055.

M&S 50cm Square Top Glass Vase, code T27/1553V 9225503.

Mattel Lazy Town Music Transporter, ASDA price £6.98 and Mattel Go Diego Play Pack, ASDA price £4.97.

Boots Learning Through Play Tiny Town - item code 27-93-520.

Pentax Three-Pin Plug Camera Cords. Products potentially affected are: Optio A20, T20, W20, S7, L20 and K10D. Tel. the Pentax Helpline on 0800 2889410.

Tesco Digital Multimeter - Model No. DT 830B, price £4.97

Fisher-Price Go Diego Go Animal Rescue Boat.

Woolworths Worthit! Orange Whoopee Cushion, return to your local store for a full refund. Tel. 0844 811 7112.

Russell Hobbs Kettle, model no. 10789. Return to retailer where it was purchased for a replacement or full refund or tel. 0800 954 8927.

Early Learning Centre My First Pram - product reference 114109 and Early Learning Centre Car Seat - product reference 113805. Return to the nearest store for a full refund or tel. 08705 352352.

Spangling Night Light - as a matter of precaution please return model - First UK DA 17 6BS, item number N0007 to the point of purchase. Tel. 0208 311 8211

Fisher Price Laugh & Learn Kitchen, model no. L5987, sold since 1 July 2007. Tel. 0808-234 8437.

Bindeez Products, recall helpline: 0800 023 4529 (UK).
Affected products: Themed Pack WB001E, Refill Pack WB00DE, Starter Pack WB002E, Super Studio WB004E, Themed Gift Set (Space/Ocean) WB022E, Themed Gift Sets (Pony) WB031E, Activity Pack (1000 beads) WB003E, Activity Pack (750 beads) WB028E, Pink Super Studio WB051E, Covermount WB0230, Value Pack WB0230.

George Noddy Children's Slippers - ASDA £5. Sizes 4-10. Tel. 0500 100 055.

Tesco My Baby's Childs Harness and Reins Tel 0800 50 55 55.

Greenbrook Electrical Wired In Timers - Models - T21HA-C, T22HA-C, T23HA-C, T65A-C, T69A-C, T70A-C, T71A-C. Tel. 0800 389 9446.

Orca Aquarium Model RA03 - tel. 01234 242 475.

Danfoss Refrigerator and Freezer Compressors
Tel 0808 238 1499.

Raleigh Wolf/Raleigh Ace Pick/Triumph React BMX Bikes
Tel. 01 773 532691.

Vivitar Vivicam 5660 Digital Camera Battery Charger. For a replacement battery charger call 0800 066 5830.

Log onto the following website to check the **latest product recalls**:

www.tradingstandards.gov.uk

If you have any topics that you would like covered in future editions or any comments about this publication please either email cscsmarketing@leics.gov.uk or telephone 0116 305 6988.

How to Contact us

If you have a problem with something that you've bought or work you have had done, please contact our consumer advice service.

Consumer Direct on:

Telephone: 08454 04 05 06*

Minicom: 08451 28 13 84

Website: www.consumerdirect.gov.uk

* The Consumer Direct advice helpline is a low-cost national telephone number.

Opening hours:

8am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday

9am to 1pm Saturday

CLOSED on bank holidays and public holidays.

After your call to Consumer Direct your complaint or enquiry may be referred to Leicestershire Trading Standards Service if appropriate.

Our Business Advice Service is available on 0116 305 8000

This information can be made available in large print or an alternative language. Please phone Consumer Direct.

Our aim is to promote a fair and safe trading environment for the people of Leicestershire. Whether you are a consumer or a business you are equally important to us.