



The Eight Basic Consumer Rights

The Right to Basic Needs

The first consumer right is THE RIGHT TO BASIC NEEDS which guarantee survival, adequate food, clothing, shelter, health care, education and sanitation.

What to do:

- Prioritize your needs
- Look for quality, not quantity
- Be quality conscious, not brand conscious
- Do not engage in panic-buying
- In times of crisis/calamity, be vigilant in ensuring that basic commodities are available in the market

The Right to Safety

The second consumer right is THE RIGHT TO SAFETY which is the right to be protected against the marketing of goods or the provision of services that are hazardous to health and life.

What to do:

- If you have sensitivity to a certain ingredient, it would be very beneficial if you read all labels and product circulars before using a certain product
- If you are in a store and have doubts about the product's effectiveness, ask for a person who knows how the products works or how to operate
- Keep certain products out of the reach of young children. Watch out for special warning signs in the label of the product like "NOT SUITED FOR CHILDREN BELOW FOUR(4) YEARS" or "POISON: For external use only etc."
- Before buying products especially in cases when only large containers are available, it would be best if you ask for a sample or tester
- Be on guard regarding products which are found to be hazardous, you can scan newspapers regularly for new bits on this topic

The Right to Information

The third consumer right is THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION which is the right to be protected against dishonest or misleading advertising or labelling and the right to be given the facts and information needed to make an informed choice.

What to do:

- Before purchasing a product, it is very important for you to read the label carefully so that you would be able to know its use, content (chemical ingredients), number of pieces, how to care for the product

- Before signing any document like warranties and guarantees, credit items or services contracts, it is important to read and understand all provisions in the documents especially the fine prints
- It is very important to read newspapers, buying guides, magazines before purchasing a product. Also, consult with friends who you know have purchased a similar product
- If you need to clarify something regarding the use of the product, don't hesitate to write the company so that you can obtain a detailed information
- It is imperative to look for the name and address of the manufacturer in case the need arises.

The Right to Choose

The fourth consumer right is THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE which is the right to choose products at competitive prices with an assurance of satisfactory quality.

What to do:

- Specify what you really want. The biggest size may be cheaper but it may not be what you need.
- Canvass price before purchasing a product or signing a contract.
- Read the manuals or instructions carefully to be able to compare one product with another because in this way, you will not miss the fine prints which might contain the information you need to determine which product would serve you better.
- If product tester are available, be sure to try one.
- Be wary of special offers like free items or buy 2 take 1 free. Compare them with the regular priced items to be sure that you are not paying for the said free items.

The Right to Representation

The fifth consumer right is THE RIGHT TO REPRESENTATION which is the right to express consumer interests in the making and execution of government policies.

What to do:

- Read newspapers, bulletin boards in private and government offices, especially in your locality for announcements of public hearings
- Take time to attend public hearings or even meetings conducted in your area wherein consumer issues are being discussed.
- Be aware of how the consumer laws and regulations are being implemented in your locality.

The Right to Redress

The sixth consumer right is THE RIGHT TO REDRESS which is the right to be compensated for misrepresentation, shoddy goods or unsatisfactory services.

What to do:

- In case you bought a defective product, try going back to the store where you bought the item and look for the Consumer Welfare Desk.
- You may request a replacement, refund or if needed, have the defective item repaired.
- If the manager or store representative does not act on your complaint, proceed to the agency which has jurisdiction over your case.
- Bring the necessary documents like complaint letter and a copy of your receipt and other documents you deem are vital for the mediation.
- Be sure to attend the mediation conference.

The Right to Consumer Education

The seventh consumer right is THE RIGHT TO CONSUMER EDUCATION which is the right to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to be an informed customer.

What to do:

- Scan newspapers, magazines and other reading materials for articles or newsbits which educate consumers on how to get the best value for their peso.
- Involve yourself in public hearings or even meetings conducted in your area wherein consumer - related issues such as access to basic goods and services, product quality and safety, sustainable consumption and the like are being discussed.
- Participate in seminars, conferences and fora conducted by government agencies, consumer groups and business / industry sector regarding news and regulations for consumer welfare.
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The Right to a Healthy Environment

The eight consumer right is THE RIGHT TO A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT which is the right to live and work in an environment which is neither threatening nor dangerous and which permits a life of dignity and well-being.

What to do:

- Be aware of the kind and extent of pollution occurring in your locality like air pollution, noise / odor etc. so that you would be able to address the problem
- Do your share in caring for our environment by practicing the 3R's of environmental protection:

REDUCE - the source of solid wastes by buying earth friendly products. These are products that could be disposed properly without harming our environment.

REUSE - products and containers as much as possible.

RECYCLE - because using recycled products and recycling per use, will prolong the life of our landfills

Ref.: <http://www.dti.gov.ph/dti/index.php?p=720>

Look more here: www.law.aboutphilippines.ph