



Chapter 14: Consumer Rights

Hong Kong is a great place to go shopping. But like anywhere else, you have to use common sense to make sure you get the best deal.

First, try to compare prices with different stores (see tip below). Since there is no price control in Hong Kong, consumer may bargain prices as they like. It would be very difficult for you to get your money back when you find that the same item is cheaper in a nearby store and you realize you've been overcharged.

Tip: Shop around and compare prices before you purchase. But watch out if the price is too low - it could be a trick!

Buying parallel goods

Hong Kong is a free port so importers can import goods from any source they wish. This means you may find the most up-to-date models imported directly from the factory and their countries of origin.

However, some products get into Hong Kong without going through the authorized agents. These “parallel import” or “grey market” goods are often cheaper than the same goods brought in by the authorized agents. This is not illegal in Hong Kong, but you may not get an international warranty. So if you buy something you intend to send home as a gift or take back with you to your own country, you should look for goods that are covered by international warranty.

Tip: If you don't want to buy parallel import goods, always tell the salesperson you wish to buy a product that is guaranteed by the Hong Kong authorized agent. Get the guarantee in writing before you pay.

Returning goods

Return policy varies with stores and trades. In most cases, only defective goods can be returned for exchange. So don't expect to exchange or return a product simply because you change your mind after the purchase.

Warning:

Watch out for dishonest shopkeepers! Bait-and-switch (promising one product at a lower price than saying only a higher priced one is available) happens in Hong Kong. Always check product information first.

Smart shopping tips

- Ask your friends in Hong Kong where the best shops are so you can get the best value.
- Visit the authorized agent's website for such product information as price, features, functions, after sales services, before you decide which product to buy.
- Visit also Consumer Council's website for more information like test reports, product comparison and recommendations which might have reported before.
- Once you've decided on a model, be aware of bait-and-switch tactics and lured into buying a different model at a higher price.
- A very low price could be a trap for bait-and-switch (see above).
- Before you pay, ask the shopkeeper to write down on the receipt what was promised during the transaction.
- Don't give your credit card to anybody before a transaction is concluded. Only sign a credit card slip that has been properly filled out. Remember to get a copy of the voucher after signing it.
- Once a credit card voucher is signed, the transaction is final. The chance of cancellation is very slim.
- Check all details of the purchase and make sure that they are written on the receipt. If they are not correct, don't pay.
- Inspect the merchandise and make sure it is the same as you agreed to buy.
- In case of a dispute, don't stay in the shop and argue. Get the receipt and approach either the Police or the Consumer Council as soon as possible.

The Consumer Council

The Consumer Council is an independent statutory body that protects your rights and interests as a consumer. It can also help solve any problems you might experience while shopping in Hong Kong. Its Complaint and Enquiry Hotline is **2929-2222**. Consumer Council Services Centres are located at the following addresses -

HONG KONG ISLAND

Address
North Point Consumer Council Services Centre Room 1410, 14/F, Kodak House II 39 Healthy Street East, North Point, Hong Kong

KOWLOON

Tsim Sha Tsui Consumer Council Services Centre G/F, 3 Ashley Road, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon
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Consumer Services Centre office hours:

Monday to Friday (except public holidays): 9:00 am - 1:00 pm
2:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Remark: Counter services by appointment

Online appointment: <https://appointment.consumer.org.hk/en>

Phone appointment: 2929 2222