



COMPLAINING EFFECTIVELY

As a consumer, if you have a problem

- Give the merchant the first chance to solve the problem.
- If there is a complaint service in the store where you made the purchase, use it. If not, talk to someone in authority, such as the manager. A face-to-face discussion is best. Be firm, but polite and business-like. Calmly and accurately describe the problem and what action you would like taken.
- Request specifics as to how and when something will be done, and get the person's name in case you have to refer to this conversation later. Keep a record of your efforts to resolve the problem.
- If a personal visit doesn't produce results, write a letter to someone higher up. Provide all details, ask for action, send a copy to the manufacturer, and be sure to keep a copy of your letter.

Sample Complaint Letter

(Date)

(Your Address)

(Name of Contact Person, if available)

(Title if available)

(Company Name)

(Consumer Complaint Division, if you have no contact person)

(Street Address)

Dear (Contact Person):

Re: (account number, if applicable)

On (Date), I (bought, leased, rented, or had repaired) a (name of the product with serial or model number or service performed) at Location.

Unfortunately, your product (or service) has not performed well (or the service was inadequate). I am disappointed because (explain the problem: for example, the product does not work properly, the service was not performed correctly, I was billed the wrong amount, something was not disclosed clearly or was misrepresented at the time of sale, etc.)

To resolve the problem, I would appreciate your (state the specific action you want – money back, charge card credit, repair, exchange, etc.) Enclosed are copies (do not send originals) of my records (include receipts, guarantees, warranties, cancelled cheques, contracts, model and serial numbers, and any other documents.

I look forward to your reply and resolution to my problem, and will wait until (set a time limit - usually ten working days is sufficient before seeking help from the Fair Trading Commission or Office of Public Counsel). Please contact me at the above address or by telephone at (home and/or office number)

Sincerely,
(Your Name)

Enclosure(s)

cc : (reference to whom you are sending a copy of this letter, e.g. product manufacturer)

Strategies for Success

- Do not be afraid to complain. The majority of businesses will be pleased to set any matter right. They realise that customer goodwill is still the best form of advertising.
- Keep a file of important information. Include copies of sales receipts, repair orders, warranties, cancelled cheques, contracts, and any letters to or from the company.
- **DO NOT PROCRASTINATE.** If a product is defective, it is important that you return it quickly so that you do not lose the right to get your money back, as well as damages in some cases.

What Now? You've Talked and Written, but Still No Result?

If you feel you have given the company enough time to resolve the problem without much success, send a copy of your letter and attached copies of supporting documents (not originals) to, or file a consumer complaint with the Fair Trading Commission or Office of Public Counsel.