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PRESS RELEASE

Consumers reminded to be vigilant whilst doing Diwali shopping

As towns and cities light up with sales, bonanzas and other promotions, consumers are reminded to be extremely vigilant when out for Diwali shopping. During such times of shopping spree, certain traders tend to take advantage of the hype of festivities by engaging in dodgy and unethical practices such as false claims, misleading and bait advertising, selling poor quality products at a premium price, selling old and expired stock or defective products. This is evident as in the 2021 Diwali season, there was a 9% increase in complaints compared to the 2020 season.

While reiterating the consumer responsibility of critical awareness; to be more alert and questioning about the price and quality of goods and services, CCoF Chief Executive Officer Ms Seema Shandil says that the commercial hype associated with this important religious and cultural event can often lead to unfair trading practices.

“Together with being responsible, consumers are urged to refrain from engaging in last-minute shopping through proper planning and strictly sticking to a budget. Consumers should avoid purchasing items purely because they are on specials but rather purchase items which are needed,” stated Ms Shandil.

Another important tenet which consumers must note is that some products which are marked on very special prices may be close to expiry and purchasing them in large quantities and being unable to use in a timely manner can result in waste of money.

The Council is also asking consumers to make smart choices as it’s not always about purchasing the cheapest item on the shelf but ensuring that item is worth your money.

“In a recent case lodged at the Council, a consumer bought a brand of condensed milk which is one of cheapest in the market. However, the condensed milk in question was of inferior quality; compelling the consumer to go out again and purchase a better-quality product. This is a classic example showcasing that the cheapest product may not always save you money and emphasizes the need for consumers to make well thought out and logical purchasing decisions,” added Ms Shandil.

The Council is also reiterating its call for consumers to demand and keep receipts as it is the proof of your purchase and a key requirement if there is a need for redress.

Meanwhile, the CCoF team has all hands-on deck with surveillance team on the ground daily throughout major towns and cities whilst also responding to consumer complaints.

“The Council has emphasized that it will not hesitate to take appropriate action and continuously push for stringent enforcement actions against traders found to be engaging in dubious practices which deprive consumers’ of their rights as well as their hard-earned money,” said Shandil.



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Mobile App

Any unethical and illegal trading practices discovered by consumers should be immediately reported to the Council on the toll-free number 155 or through the Consumer Council of Fiji mobile app.

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Ms Seema Shandil
Chief Executive Officer