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Consumer Council of Fiji



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PRESS RELEASE

Consumer Council of Fiji Steps Up Market Surveillance Ahead of Festive Season

As consumers prepare to celebrate the Festival of Lights, the Consumer Council of Fiji has intensified its market surveillance operations across the country to safeguard consumers from unethical and unsafe trading practices. In the weeks leading up to Diwali, the Council conducted approximately 353 spot checks in Suva, Lautoka, and Labasa, targeting supermarkets, open markets, and retail outlets selling high-demand festive goods such as dairy items, sweets, decorative lights, and fireworks.

Issues uncovered included the sale of expired dairy products, fungal growth in pre-packed garlic, damaged or resealed food items, and even tampering of expiry dates on sugar packets. The Council also noted misleading advertising practices, such as the failure to disclose promotion validity periods or exaggerated “special offer” claims. While most traders cooperated with Council officers and rectified issues on the spot, formal warning letters were issued for serious non-compliance. Verbal warnings were also given to several traders who failed to meet food safety and labelling standards.

“The findings highlight the need for vigilance from both traders and consumers during festive periods,” said Council CEO Seema Shandil. “For businesses, customers are essential. By behaving ethically, they not only build a base of loyal customers but also build long-term trust and loyalty,” she added.

The Council continues to work closely with municipal councils, market associations, and enforcement agencies to ensure traders meet their legal responsibilities during the festive rush. “Diwali is a time of joy and giving, but it should not be a time for exploitation. We are reminding traders that fair pricing, product safety, and honest advertising are not optional they are obligations under the law. We therefore call on all businesses to act ethically, because they can be subject to legal action as well by enforcement agencies,” says Ms Shandil.

The Council further advises consumers to be cautious of unclear discounts or “too good to be true” promotions, and to report any unfair or unsafe trading practices via the National Consumer Helpline 155 or the Council’s official social media pages.

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As Diwali draws near, the Council encourages all Fijians to shop smart, support ethical traders, and celebrate responsibly.

“Let this Diwali be not only a celebration of light and family, but also of fairness and integrity in our marketplaces,” Shandil added.

The Consumer Council of Fiji wishes everyone a safe, bright, and scam-free Deepawali.

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