

I Was Sold Defective Goods

What Do I Do?

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In today's marketplace, you should expect quality products and services at fair prices. When something goes wrong, however, you need to let the company or professional know about your problem. Not only is direct contact the fastest way to get your complaint resolved, but it also gives the company a chance to keep you as a satisfied customer and gain new customers by learning from mistakes. Most companies and professionals welcome this opportunity.

Basic Steps

Following these basic steps will help to achieve a successful outcome:

- ✧ Identify the problem and what you believe would be a fair settlement. Do you want your money back? Would you like the product repaired? Will an exchange do?
- ✧ Be prepared to answer reasonable questions from the seller. How long has it been since you purchased the product? Did you read and follow any operation and safety instructions supplied with the product? Did the product come with a warranty or written guarantee from the seller? If yes, what were the terms and conditions of the warranty or guarantee?
- ✧ Gather documentation regarding your complaint. Sales receipts, repair orders, warranties, canceled checks, or contracts will help to back up your complaint and provide the company the necessary information to solve your problem.
- ✧ Contact the person who sold you the item or performed the service. *Calmly* and accurately explain the problem and what action you would like taken. If that person is not helpful, ask for the supervisor or manager and repeat your story. A large percentage of consumer problems are resolved at this level.
- ✧ If you are not satisfied with the response, don't give up. If the company operates nationally or the product is a national brand, write a letter to the person responsible for consumer complaints at the company's headquarters. Many national companies have consumer complaint channels. If the company doesn't have a consumer office, direct your letter

to the president of the company.

- ✧ If you need the president's name and the address of the company, first check any literature that came with the product. You can also look in your phone directory to see if the company has a local office. If it does, call and ask for the name and address of the company's president. If you don't have the name of the company or manufacturer of the product, check your local library for assistance.
- ✧ Remember that you are a disciple of Jesus Christ. What would He do? Jesus would not use threats, insulting or degrading language, but He would speak the truth with kindness. At the same time He would be prepared to go the second mile and forgive a debt in order to preserve the integrity of the Gospel.

Writing a Complaint Letter

Writing a complaint letter is done on the assumption that going to the other party has failed to resolve the problem or the distance is too far to go.

- ✧ Type your letter, if possible. If it is handwritten, make sure that it is neat and easy to read.
- ✧ Make your letter brief and to the point. Include all important facts about the sale or agreement and what you expected to happen. Recount dates and places and any information that supports your claim. Be sure to include your complete name, address and home and work phone numbers.
- ✧ Remind the party of the actions you have taken to try to resolve the problem.
- ✧ State exactly what you want done about the

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problem and express a willingness to work together for a mutually-satisfying outcome, including being willing to submit the matter to binding arbitration to settle the dispute.

✧ Specify how long you are willing to wait to get it resolved. Twenty-one days is a reasonable length of time to wait for a response to your letter, since it may have to be routed to someone else for action.

✧ Include with your letter any documents that support your claims. Be sure to send copies, not originals. In addition, provide all important facts about your purchase including the date and place where you made the purchase and any information you can give about the product or service such as serial or model numbers or specific type of service. Be sure to mail the

letter with a return receipt or delivery confirmation.

✧ Avoid writing an angry, sarcastic or threatening letter. The person reading your letter probably was not responsible for your problem, but may be very helpful in resolving it. Don't state your assumptions about their motives. Don't judge their intentions from your fears. Focus on behavior and actions.

✧ Finally, keep a copy of all correspondence pertaining to your efforts to resolve the problem. Also, keep notes of conversations or other interactions with names and phone numbers of company representatives. This information will be invaluable if the help of a consumer advocacy or protection agency, or the services of an attorney become necessary.

Sample Letter

Your Address
Your City, State, Zip Code
Date

Appropriate Person
Company Name
Street Address
City, State, Zip code

Dear (Appropriate Name):

Last week I purchased (or had repaired) a (name of product with serial or model number or service performed). I made this purchase at (location, date and other important details of the transaction).

Unfortunately, your product (or service) has not performed satisfactorily (or the service was inadequate) because (explain details).

Therefore, to solve the problem, I would appreciate your (here state the specific action you want). Enclosed are copies (copies - NOT originals) of my records (receipts, guarantees, warranties, canceled checks, contracts, model and serial numbers, and any other documents).

I am looking forward to your reply and resolution of my problem, and will wait until (give a specific date) before seeking other assistance. Contact me at the above address or by phone at (home and work numbers here).

Sincerely,
Your Name