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**Who Can You Complain To?**

Cooperative Extension South Dakota State University

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Who Can You Complain To?

Cooperative Extension Service
South Dakota State University
U.S. Department of Agriculture
WHO CAN YOU COMPLAIN TO?

If you’ve ever been caught on the short end of a clothing buy—but you weren’t sure how to complain and get results—then read on!

Even the best buying habits can lead to a disastrous purchase now and then through no fault of your own. But by bringing your complaint to the attention of people in the textiles and clothing industry, you can do a favor for yourself—and for other consumers.

After all, the industry can’t learn what we want—unless we speak up. And consumer voices have brought about changes.

DETERMINE WHETHER YOU HAVE A VALID COMPLAINT

Ask yourself these questions to make sure you can defend your complaint:
- Did you abuse the garment in any way?
- Did you wear it as the manufacturer intended?
- Did you follow the “care instructions”?

An unjustified complaint may only interfere with a company’s handling of legitimate complaints.

But if you have met your responsibilities in the use and care of the garment, then you’re ready to begin your complaint.

GET THE FACTS TOGETHER

1. The date and place of purchase
2. A copy of the sales slip
3. A note of how often the garment was worn
4. The type of wear the garment received
5. The care information given on the label
6. The specific care you gave the garment
7. A description of why the garment was unsatisfactory
8. What you want done (for instance, a refund, exchange, or repair)

START CLOSE TO HOME

If you bought the garment in a small store, start with the salesperson with whom you did business.

If the store has a consumer service department, take your complaint there.

If you still aren’t satisfied, ask to see the manager.

Usually, a business with a reputation for dealing fairly with its customers will be most helpful.

It has an image to protect. And you, as a customer, can aid or impair that reputation.

OR WRITE FOR HELP

If you don’t know where the garment was purchased,

if you purchased it a great distance from home,

or if you were unsuccessful in dealing with your local merchant,

THEN write to the manufacturer.

Every garment must carry the manufacturer’s identification. This usually appears on a hang-tag. But sometimes, the information is permanently attached to the garment.

Your public library has reference books with listings of consumer information. One you might ask for is the

Consumer Sourcebook
edited by Paul Wasserman and Jean Morgan
published by the Gale Research Co.
Book Tower
Detroit, Mich. 49226

This book gives the names and addresses of company presidents or consumer relations directors.
When you write your letter, clearly state the nature of your problem and include all the necessary facts. (Use those mentioned earlier in this pamphlet.)

If you send the faulty garment along with your letter, it will usually bring a quick response. But if you do choose to do this, make sure you insure the package and attach your letter to the outside. That way, all your information will arrive together.

Keep copies of any letters you send.

IF YOU NEED TO, TAKE IT A STEP FURTHER

If the merchant or manufacturer fails to satisfy your complaint, you can contact:

The Office of the State Attorney General
Consumer Protection Division
Insurance Building
Pierre, SD 57501

Send along copies of your previous correspondence and of the replies you received from the store or manufacturer.

For complaints about specific business practices, contact:

The Chamber of Commerce

Your local Chamber is made up of community business people. They can make suggestions to an area business which may be causing you problems.

For complaints about mislabeled or unlabeled textile products, contact:

The Consumer Protection Division
Federal Trade Commission
Room 2806, Federal Office Bldg.
911 Walnut St.
Kansas City, Mo. 64106

For concerns about fabric flammability or textile product safety, contact:

Consumer Product Safety Commission
1750 K St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20207

or call the Commission's toll-free hotline, at 1-800-638-2666

COMPLIMENTS COUNT, TOO!

In addition to your complaints, share your compliments—and questions—about today's textile products. Merchants and manufacturers are interested in hearing what you have to say. And by speaking up, you can help bring about better products and services for yourself and for other consumers.

For more information contact Linda Manikowske, Extension clothing and textiles specialist. Prepared by Rae Reilly and Jacquelyn Yep and reprinted with permission of Iowa Cooperative Extension Service. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with USDA. Hollis D. Hall, Director of CES, SDSU, Brookings. Education programs and materials offered without regard to age, race, color, religion, sex, handicap, or national origin. An Equal Opportunity Employer.