



Shopping online offers great choice, value and convenience to consumers across Europe. However, the latest ECC network report shows that there are persistent problems in this area which need to be addressed- see below for more.

Our consumer query this week comes from a person confused about the new VRT rules for cars which due to come in on July 1st 2008.

If you have had a problem with a purchase of goods or services from another EU country, please contact us on 01 8090600 or at info@eccireland.ie. For information on your consumer rights when buying something in another European country, see www.eccireland.ie.

Rosaleen Quinlan

Editor

1. What should I be aware of when shopping online?

The latest ECC report analyses 10,386 consumer complaints across 27 European countries, and found that the main problems reported related to delivery (50%).

To read a copy of the 'Online Marketplace' report, please see:

http://www.eccdublin.ie/news/whats_new.html

When shopping online, bear the following advice in mind:

- Know the name and physical address of the retailer
- Know the cost of item, currency of payment, methods of payment, delivery method/timing
- Read the terms and conditions carefully to find out rights and obligations under the contract.
- Be satisfied with the site security to ensure the secure transmission of personal information over the web. Secure sites' payment sections will have a padlock symbol on the bottom right hand corner and/or an 's' after the 'http' in the address bar i.e. 'https'

- Check your credit card statement carefully to ensure that you have been billed correctly.

To find out more information about a particular website or for more information on your rights when shopping online, use our 'Online Shopping Assistant' available at www.eccireland.ie.

2. Consumer query of the month

I'm thinking of importing a second-hand car from the UK, but am confused about the new VRT rules. Can you clarify the changes?

From 1 July 2008, Vehicle Registration Tax or VRT, will no longer be based on the engine size, as it currently is, but rather on the carbon dioxide emissions from the car. This fundamental change will impact on the amount of VRT charged on second-hand cars (Category A) imported from abroad as well as on new cars.

When an imported second-hand vehicle is presented for registration, the levels of CO₂ emissions at the time of manufacture must be declared to Revenue on form VRT4 (the form used by an individual to register a second hand car). If the vehicle originated within the EU, the declaration must be supported by documentary evidence confirming the level of CO₂ emissions of the vehicle to the satisfaction of Revenue. The Vehicle Registration Office official will calculate the rate after he/she inspects the vehicle. If a vehicle is registered without any supporting documentation, VRT will be charged at 36%. Certain reliefs are available on hybrid electric and flexible fuel vehicles.

There is no change for Category B (crew cabs, etc.), Category C (commercial vehicles) or Category M (motorcycles – other than electric motorcycles). For further information, see <http://www.revenue.ie/>

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