



Shopping in Northern Ireland can offer great value and convenience for consumers in the Republic of Ireland, and is extremely popular. Sometimes consumers are a little confused as to their rights in the two jurisdictions. See below for some information on this area.

On a related point, one consumer from Dublin wonders if she can use her Free Travel Pass when travelling in the North.

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@eccdublin.ie. For information on your consumer rights when buying something in another European country, see www.eccdublin.ie.

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Editor

1. What do I need to know when shopping in Northern Ireland?

Cross-border shopping in Northern Ireland can offer great value; bear the following points in mind when you go:

Cars are a very popular purchase for cross-border shoppers. You should also be aware that consumer legislation does not apply to private sales so you should exercise extreme caution if buying privately. Remember that you will have to re-register the car immediately after you bring it across the border. You will also have to pay Vehicle Road Tax. More information on VRT is available on the Revenue website at

<http://www.revenue.ie/index.htm?/leaflets/vrt1.htm>

Your consumer rights are enforceable across Europe. If the item is faulty, you have the right to repair, replacement or refund of the product in question.

Check the returns policy. Do not assume that you can return items to your local store. Many chain-stores have branches on both sides of the border; so many people assume that an item can be returned to any branch, or that a voucher may be redeemed at any branch. While this often is the case, remember that your contract is with the specific store where you purchased the item, and it may not necessarily have any arrangement with other stores.

2. Consumer query of the month

I'm 72, living in Dublin and have a Free Travel Pass. Can it be used in Northern Ireland also?

Since April 2007, you can use public transport free of charge in Northern Ireland as well as in the Republic, but you will need to apply for a separate 'SmartPass' card.

You can obtain the application form (Form FTNI1) from your local social welfare office, Citizens Information Centre or by phoning Lo-call 1890 202325. It may take up to six weeks to process the application for a SmartPass card.

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