

### 3 Pay Safely

- Never send cash or use a money-wiring service because you'll have no recourse if something goes wrong. You usually enjoy more protection if you use a credit card.
- Make sure you use a secure website to enter credit card information. Look for a closed padlock symbol at the bottom right of the browser window and for the website address to begin with 'https://'
- Make sure your computer has up-to-date anti-virus software and a firewall installed.

### 4 Avoid Scams

- Never, ever, reply to unsolicited emails (spam) and be careful when clicking links in emails to avoid potential threats such as phishing.
- Watch out for tell tale signs of scams: promise of huge rewards such as lottery winnings, urgent action required and requests for upfront payment or private information. Be sceptical of all unsolicited contact and remember if it sounds too good to be true, it generally is.
- Do not disclose personal information which is not necessary to complete a transaction. Certain personal details, combined with your credit card number could potentially lead to identity theft!
- Avoid buying counterfeit goods. Such products are often dangerous or of poor quality and it can be very difficult to get redress should something go wrong. Bear in mind the sale of fake goods is illegal and is often linked to organised crime.

### 5 Understand Your Commitment

- Always read the small print and know exactly what you are agreeing to before going ahead with the contract. In particular ensure you are aware of the trader's cancellation and returns policies.

### TOP TIP

Use the Howard Online Shopping Assistant tool on [www.eccireland.ie](http://www.eccireland.ie) to find out when, and where, a website was registered and other background information.



**HOWARD**  
THE SHOPPING ASSISTANT

### If Things Go Wrong...

- ✓ Make a complaint to the web trader in writing.
- ✓ Keep copies of all correspondence exchanged and screenshots of anything unusual.
- ✓ If you receive no satisfaction from a trader located in another EU country then contact ECC Ireland for further advice and assistance.
- ✓ If you have a complaint against a web trader based in Ireland you should complain to the National Consumer Agency [www.consumerconnect.ie](http://www.consumerconnect.ie)

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The information in this leaflet is intended to provide general guidance only. It is not intended to be a full description of the law nor reflect the views of the sponsoring organisations.

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**EUROPEAN CONSUMER CENTRE IRELAND**

## Shopping Online

Shopping online offers incredible **choice**, **value**, and **access** to an enormous, 24-hour marketplace from the comfort of our homes. This leaflet helps to explain your rights when shopping online and contains useful tips on how to avoid potential pitfalls.



When buying goods and services over the internet from a European website, you still have the same rights as if you were shopping on the high street in relation to faulty or misdescribed goods. In addition, you benefit from extra protections under European Directive 97/7/EC on distance selling.



## RIGHT TO CLEAR INFORMATION

Clear and comprehensive information must be provided to the consumer before purchase e.g. name of trader and full physical address, main characteristics of the goods or services including all taxes, and information about your right to cancel.

You should receive confirmation of this information in a durable form (e.g. email), unless such details have been given prior to the conclusion of the contract. In all cases, you should be provided with the geographical address of the trader and informed, when relevant, about the procedures for cancelling the contract.

## RIGHT TO CANCEL

When you shop online you have at least **seven working days** from the date of receipt of the goods during which you can cancel the contract. In the case of services, the right to cancel starts on the day of the conclusion of the contract. You do not have to give any reason but you must inform the trader in writing that you wish to cancel.

If you do not receive information on your right to cancel as required above, your cancellation period may be extended by up to 3 months.

Where a consumer has cancelled the contract they are entitled to a refund within 30 days of cancellation. The only charge payable by a consumer is the direct cost of returning the goods.

**WARNING:** there are exceptions to the right to cancel. For example, you cannot return goods made to your personal specifications, CDs and DVDs if the security seal is broken, or perishable goods like fresh food or flowers.

## RIGHT TO REFUND in case of delayed delivery

The trader must deliver the goods or perform the service within a maximum of 30 days after you placed your order, unless otherwise agreed. If the trader fails to perform its obligation, you are entitled to a full refund which the trader must provide within 30 days.



**REMEMBER:**  
Not all transactions are covered under Directive 97/7/EC.

Internet auction sites are excluded from the Directive while contracts for the provision of services to be performed on a specific date or time such as hotel bookings, travel tickets or concert tickets are excluded from certain provisions e.g. cooling off period.

## TOP 5 TIPS FOR SAFE ONLINE SHOPPING

### 1 Know Who You Are Dealing With

- Try to shop on a familiar or recommended site and make sure you have the name and full contact details, including postal address, of the web trader so you know who you are dealing with. Never rely on just an email address or a post office box.
- Don't assume that a website is based in the country indicated by its web address e.g. '.ie' does not necessarily mean the website is based in Ireland.



**REMEMBER:**  
If you shop from websites based outside the EU your European consumer rights may not apply and you may face unexpected customs and tax bills!

### 2 Do Your Homework

- Beware of sites that have only recently been set up. Fraudulent sites come and go very quickly.
- Always research the background of unfamiliar web traders before purchase. A simple internet search should reveal any negative feedback about the trader left by other consumers but be aware that some unscrupulous traders may also leave false positive feedback about themselves.
- Web based fraudsters may also pay for search advertising so their sites appear at the top of search results so don't be fooled by a prominent search engine ranking.

Shop All Departments

