

## How Can You Be A Smart Consumer?

Plan ahead and stick to your plan of what to buy, when to buy, and where to buy. Go shopping only when you have a specific purchase to make that fits within your budget and is part of your overall financial plan. Go through each of these steps first:

1. Plan at Home. This is where good buying begins. Keep the following in mind:
  - What you have
  - What you need
  - When you really need it
  - How the item will be used
  - What size, color, quantity, and quality you want
  - The price you want to pay
2. Make a Shopping List. Organize your list by the location of stores and the location of things within the store. This will save backtracking, prevent forgetting something, and help you avoid buying something you don't need.
3. Decide on Quality. When you decide the type and quality you want in an item, consider:
  - How you will use the article
  - How long you will use it
  - How you will care for it
  - How it looks
  - Can you get the same quality somewhere else for less?

## GUARANTEES

A guarantee is only as good as the people who give it. Know the "if's, and's, or but's" connected with any guarantee.

- Understand terms of the guarantee
- Make sure the manufacturer can back it up

Read the guarantee carefully. What does it cover? How long will it be in force? Is the whole item included or just a part of it? Who is making the guarantee? Remember, keep the receipt as a dated receipt will help you make a claim.

Think several times before you buy an additional service warranty. What is the possibility the unit will need a repair that costs as much as the "warranty" during the next three years?

Note: The sellers of a warranty expect to make money. They figure the odds are in their favor that they will get to keep your money and NOT have to do the work. This generally means the odds are in your favor if you don't buy the additional warranty.

## SALES

Sales are held for many reasons: to make room for new goods, to sell surplus or shop-worn goods, to get you into the store, and to introduce new products. However, the best

sales are usually held by established stores because they want to keep your good will and your business.

#### When You Buy at Sales

- Consider the time, energy, and expenses of getting to the sale.
- Shop at the start of the sale for the best selection.
- Be sure the sale price is an actual reduction from the regular price.
- Watch for imperfect or damaged articles.
- Check styles. Items likely to go out of style may be poor buys.
- Remember, nothing is a bargain unless you need it.

#### YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AS A SHOPPER

##### Be an Informed Shopper

- Report your wants, likes, and dislikes to dealers and manufacturers so they can serve you better.
- Praise and buy from dealers who sell better goods and services at reasonable prices.
- Avoid hasty buying which causes unnecessary returns.
- Pay bills promptly.
- Inform proper agencies of dishonesty, fraud, or violations of the law.

##### Avoid Impulse Buying

Decide what you will buy before you get to a store. Spur-of-the-moment decisions can wreck your family spending plan. To avoid impulse buying:

- Have a spending plan and stick with it.
- Include in your spending plan the amount you can spend “just for fun.”
- Just walk away or hang up the phone if you know the purchase isn’t in your plan.
- Make a list and stick to it.
- Shop for food yourself or train others in the family to shop wisely.
- Ask questions such as, “When will I use it?” and, “Where will I store it?”
- Make a rule to “sleep on” a major purchase. The offer should be just as good the next day.
- Don’t shop on payday, when you’re tired, or for food when you’re hungry.
- Take your time. Try not to shop when you have to hurry.

#### CONCLUSION

##### REMEMBER:

- **YOU DON’T HAVE TO BUY IT TODAY!**
- **NO ONE CAN MAKE YOU BUY ANYTHING!**
- **STICK TO YOUR PLAN!**