

CONSUMER COMPLAINTS/COMPLIMENTS LECTURE NOTES

CONSUMER COMPLAINTS/COMPLIMENTS

It is imperative whenever a consumer complains that the complaint be done promptly. It is also important that the complaint be directed to the appropriate person or the person with the authority to handle the situation. It is senseless to complain to a salesclerk over company policy because the salesclerk has no more control over the company policy than the consumer does. Whenever writing a complaint letter, make sure that it is done in a timely manner and that it has been directed to the appropriate person(s).

When writing a complaint letter, type it, if possible. If it is handwritten, make sure that it is neat and easy to read. It is not in your best interest to write an angry, sarcastic, or threatening letter. Most likely, the person reading your letter was not responsible for your problem, but does have authority to deal with it.

Use the transparency "Complaint Letter" to explain the procedure of writing a letter of complaint. (The teacher talk is printed in italics.)

COMPLAINT LETTER

1. Include your name, address, home and work telephone numbers and account number where applicable.

(Many complaint letters have been written that a company would like to deal with, but the consumer has left no address or phone number to enable the company to locate them. If you want your letter to be answered, you must provide them with the means to do it.)

2. The name of the person(s) you are writing to, their title, the company name and address.

(As you decide to whom to send your complaint, be sure that the person has the necessary authority to address your concerns.)

3. Important facts about the purchase. The date and place of the purchase and all product information such as model or serial number, size, color, and any other important information.

(Keep your letter brief and to the point. Make sure that all important facts concerning your purchase are included. Be sure to include all necessary information about the product you purchased.)

4. If you are writing to complain about a service, describe the service which you received.

(If you are writing to complain about a service you received, describe the service in detail and include the name of the person who performed the service.)

5. Clarify the subject of the complaint. Clearly describe the problem.

(Be very specific in describing the problem. How was the product defective, was there a problem in billing, conduct of personnel, etc.)

6. State your expectations. What do you want done about the problem and how long are you willing to wait to have it resolved?

(What will it take to make you happy? Be reasonable in your expectations. State exactly what you want done about the problem and how long you are willing to wait to have it resolved.)

7. Include copies of all important documents: bills, sales receipts, etc.

(Be sure to include copies of all documents regarding the problem. Do not send any original documents, only copies of the original. Keep a copy of all letters to and from the company. Whenever copies of documents are being included with the complaint letter, be sure to mention it in the letter.)

Sometimes results from a complaint letter do not come quickly. Be persistent, continue writing two, three, or four times if necessary to get the results that you want. If you find that you have directed the letter to someone who seems to be unable to assist you, then redirect the letter to someone else who can better assist you.

TEACHER NOTE: A sample complaint letter is found in the *Consumer's Resource Handbook* available through the State Division of Consumer Protection, 801-530-6601. You may wish to make a transparency of the letter and review it with the class before assigning them to write their own letter.