

**Our Mission:** To foster a business environment where ethical relations between service providers and the consumers of these services can thrive through public education, consumer advocacy and efficient complaint resolution.

**Our Vision:** To empower consumers in making better-informed business decisions when conducting business in the marketplace.

#### **Our Values**

Accountability — We operate transparently and encourage public participation in our decision-making when appropriate.

Consumer protection — We make effective and informed decisions to protect the health and safety of consumers.

Customer Service — We acknowledge our stakeholders as customers, listen to them, and take their needs into account.

Innovation — We value creative problem-solving, responsible risk-taking, and enthusiastic pursuit of new ideas.

Integrity — We are committed to honesty, ethical conduct, and responsibility.

Diversity — We foster a welcoming environment of openness and appreciation for all.



**Helping to create a competitive and fair market place for businesses and consumers.**



**Ministry of International Trade, Industry & Commerce and Consumer Affairs**



## **Consumer Affairs Department**

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**Who we are and what we do...** 

## About Us

The Consumer Affairs Department was established to inform, educate, and empower consumers to protect themselves in the marketplace.

We are the Government Agency entrusted with enforcing consumer protection laws within the Federation of St. Kitts & Nevis. Our purpose is to safeguard the interests of all consumers.

### **To do this, we:**

- Conduct market research
- Monitor the prices of essential commodities that fall within the government price monitoring program
- Engage in consumer awareness programs
- Assist in obtaining redress for consumers: Refund, Repair, Repair

In general, the government must ensure that appropriate measures are taken to:

- Provide for the production and supply of goods and provision of services.
- Ensure the protection of life, health and safety of the consumers.
- Ensure that consumers have access to adequate information to make informed choices.
- Encourage fair and effective competition in order to provide consumers with a range of products of different quality, quantity and price.
- Encourage high levels of ethical practices for those involved in provision of goods and services.
- Ensure that the consumers have easy access to make themselves heard on any matter that affects them.
- Ensure that there is adequate and effective redress for aggrieved consumers.

### **Who is a Consumer?**

Everyone who buys and uses goods and services to satisfy their needs and wants.

### **Who is affected by consumer protection?**

Everyone.

### **When are consumers affected?**

Whenever we purchase products or have a service provided to us, the issue of consumer rights and consumer protection arises.

### **What should a consumer do when he/she realizes that there is an issue with a product/service?**

- Stop using the item.
- Avoid trying to fix the problem.
- Notify the supplier at once.
- Take the item back with your receipt.
- Speak to the manager/owner. Discuss the type of redress desired.
- If unable to resolve the problem with the supplier, contact the Consumer Affairs Department.

Consumer feedback provides suppliers with an opportunity to improve their service and ultimately attract more customers. If a complaint is legitimate, consumers should have no hesitation in going back to the provider to request that the problem be fixed.

### **Why is consumer education important?**

Consumer education provides consumers with the information they need, on products and services, in order to make well-informed decisions. It helps consumers understand their rights and ensures that businesses are held accountable by governing agencies and the consumers that use their products and services.

### **Who can access our services?**

- Any member of the public who is dissatisfied with a good or service and is seeking redress or advice.
- Any person or agency who is seeking or interested in consumer-related information.
- Suppliers requiring guidance on the basis of complaints.

### **When you deal with us, you can expect:**

- timely, accurate and accessible service.
- to be dealt with fairly and courteously.
- to have your privacy rights respected.
- that we will advise you of waiting times, and of a time frame for the progress or completion of your complaint.
- that we will provide you with an explanation of our procedures, and what we can and cannot do.
- that if your issue is outside our area of authority and it is possible to refer you to another agency, we will do so.
- that we will advise you of any rights that you may have.

Consumer Affairs must be dynamic, in order to be effective - by setting the agenda, defining solutions, shaping opportunities, and interacting with those who provide goods and services in a positive and creative way.

The Department supports and works directly with consumers and suppliers. We seek to protect, inform, and give a voice to consumers nationally.

The first line of defense in consumer protection begins with us the consumers; we must scrutinize, compare and make wise decisions.