

Customer Complaints

What do you do when you spend your hard-earned money on a product and it turns out to be defective or worthless? What should you do? Customer complaints, filed in an effective manner can help.

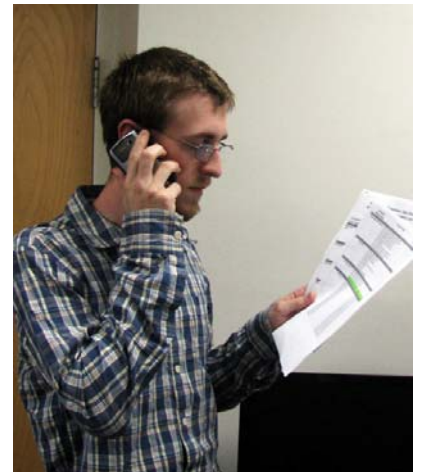
Steps to Effective Complaints

1. Complain as soon as possible. This increases your chance for a satisfactory settlement. If you postpone complaining, the company may not be responsible for solving your problem.
2. Contact the merchant who sold you the product or service by phone. Be prepared to answer any questions they may have. Clearly present your problem, and make sure relevant information is on hand, including: a description of the item model and/or serial number, account number, receipt, billing statement. Have a clear, brief explanation of what the problem is and how you want the merchant to respond. Be courteous, speak in a calm voice.
3. If phone contact is unsuccessful, try to go to the merchant in person and ask to speak to the manager or a supervisor. Be calm, courteous, and explain your complaint in clear and concise terms.
4. If your first attempts result in failure, it is time to put your complaint in writing. The letter may be sent to the merchant or the manufacturer. Complaint letters are important because a business may ignore a complaint if it is not in writing. Sometimes the person who has the authority to solve the problem may not be aware of your complaint, and a letter brings it to their attention.

Complaint Letter

If personal contact fails your next step is to write a letter of complaint. In most cases, a letter will result in a satisfactory settlement, or at least an official response.

- Your name, address, home and work phone numbers
- Your account number, if applicable
- A copy of your receipt and related documents (do not send originals)
- A brief explanation of the problem and important facts
- The model, make, and serial number, etc. of the item
- A description of what you have done to resolve the problem
- How you would like the problem resolved
- Be sure to keep and have available the names of the employees you talked to or who made the sale.
- Be clear and make sure your description of the problem is factual; do not exaggerate.
- Write the letter in a courteous and business-like tone
- Keep the letter as short as possible and still convey the message



Additional Steps

If a complaint letter does not get a satisfactory response, additional steps may be taken such as contacting the Better Business Bureau. Their services are free and they may be able to assist you in finding a resolution to your problem. You may contact the Consumer Protection Agency of your state's Attorney General's office to file a formal complaint, or you may file in Small Claims Court if the amount of your loss warrants this action and the cost of filing the case.

The internet has also become a place where groups can file complaints, hopefully gaining attention of the company by mass pressure. Try searching online for complaints by others for the same product or company. Many message boards are already established where you can register your displeasure with a product, service, or company. As with all complains, be sure that you stick to the facts and present your story in clear and concise language.