

CONSUMER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

President John F. Kennedy introduced the concept of consumer rights in 1962, when he defined four basic rights of consumers to Congress. Later, the United Nations expanded the number of rights to eight. To be a savvy consumer, you must be an informed consumer, aware of the rights afforded to you as well as your responsibilities in that role. Do you know your rights and responsibilities as a consumer?

“Right” is defined as a moral or legal entitlement to have or obtain something, such as a power or privilege, or to act in a certain way. In this context, consumers’ rights are protected by regulations which prevent consumers from harm. The [Consumer Bill of Rights](#) enumerates eight rights of consumers:

1. **Right to safety** – the right to protection from products which pose a hazard to humans and property, in both the sale and marketing of products, and leads to the expectation that items are safe when used in the manner intended and any warnings are abided.
2. **Right to choose** – the right to access to a range of products and services at reasonable prices.
3. **Right to be heard** – the right to voice concerns or complaints to a business, or to a government entity to influence policy.
4. **Right to be informed** – the right of consumers to be given certain reliable and sufficient information by businesses about products or services to make knowledgeable decisions. This right protects against false labeling, misleading claims, or incorrect marketing information.
5. **Right to redress** – the right of the consumer to have problems resolved fairly when brought forth.
6. **Right to consumer education** – the right to be provided with the tools, both knowledge and skill, to make sensible decisions as a consumer, such as comparing quality or cost.
7. **Right to service** – the right to be treated courteously and with respect.
8. **Right to a healthy environment** – the right to work and reside in an environment which is protected from pollution.

Each of the rights above assumes the consumer utilizes their rights, i.e. the consumer is responsible for availing themselves of the information and opportunities provided for them. Using the rights above, what responsibilities does the consumer have?

1. **Right to safety** – the consumer is responsible for reading and considering product labels and directions.
2. **Right to choose** – the consumer is responsible for comparing price and value when choosing products and services, identifying unfair or dishonest practices, and being honest with sellers.
3. **Right to be heard** – the consumer is responsible for reporting sellers or products do not adhere to law or safety practices, informing a business when a product or service falls short of your expectations, and utilizing this right without misusing it.
4. **Right to be informed** – the consumer is responsible for reviewing and considering provided information, seeking additional information if needed, and verifying the accuracy of information on a product or service.
5. **Right to redress** – the consumer is responsible for knowing how to pursue a solution to any complaint or grievance with a product or service, and following instructions when requesting a provider honor a guarantee or warranty.
6. **Right to consumer education** – the consumer is responsible for becoming an informed consumer and using the resources provided to protect their rights.
7. **Right to service** – the consumer is responsible for expecting to be treated respectfully and treating others respectfully in return.
8. **Right to a healthy environment** – the consumer is responsible for being environmentally conscious and making well-informed decisions about their environmental impact.

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services’ [Division of Consumer Services](#) serves as the state’s clearinghouse for matters relating to consumer protection, consumer information, and consumer services regardless of whether the specific industry is regulated by the department. A variety of consumer resources are available at [Consumer Resources - Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services](#). If you have a dispute or grievance that has not been satisfactorily resolved, you can [file a complaint](#) with the division.