

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Mail Order

Mail order shopping is an attractive alternative for many people because it allows them to shop for goods and services from home.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO CONSIDER BEFORE BUYING THROUGH MAIL ORDER:

CHECK LOCAL PRICES - Local shops may be competitive in price or may deliver.

SHOP AROUND - check with colleagues, friends or family for recommendations of mail order companies they use and are happy with.

PHONE OR EMAIL THE TRADER - ask about the goods and services the trader provides. Ask how long they have been operating their business.

CHECK TRADER CONTACT DETAILS - check the trader has a street address as well as a post office box number and phone number. This will make contacting them easier.

PACKAGING COSTS - there may be packaging and postal costs to think of.

DELIVERY TIME - check how long it will take for goods to be delivered.

REFUND AND RETURNS POLICIES - check who pays to return the goods and whether it applies to goods that are damaged in transit.

WARRANTIES - what warranty or money-back guarantee applies to the goods? If possible obtain this in writing.

INSURANCE - check if the goods are insured while in transit and who pays the insurance.

FINE PRINT - check you are not unwittingly entering into an agreement committing you to buying additional products in the future.

CREDIT CARDS - Think carefully about providing credit card details. Don't agree to any open-ended charges against your credit card. Settle the exact amount.

CHECK THE GOODS ON ARRIVAL - once goods are received, if they are not what you ordered, notify the trader and return the goods immediately for a refund or a credit.

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