



MICHIGAN ATTORNEY GENERAL

CONSUMER ALERT

What a Savvy Consumer Should Know About In-Store-Only Rebates

It sounds like a good deal: “10% Off EVERYTHING!” But take a closer look. You are not getting that \$50 item for \$45.00 (\$50 less 10%). Instead, you have to pay full price today and get money off on a future in-store purchase — after you fill out and timely mail in your rebate form with proper documentation.

A number of consumers have complained about companies offering temporary in-store-only rebates with terms or conditions so complicated that many consumers will either fail to send in the requisite paperwork or fail to redeem the rebate altogether. As a result, they never receive the “discount.”

As a savvy shopper, it pays to take a moment to read and understand any offer. And while it is not illegal to offer in-store-only rebates, it also may not be in your best interest.

Note: If you purchase a rebate-eligible product and never receive the promised rebate, you should file a consumer complaint with our office immediately so we can track and pursue as appropriate.

Rebate Reality



The fine print may limit your discount to “stock on hand” and inform you that by submitting a rebate form, you agree to binding arbitration for any dispute about the rebate and you waive your right to file or participate in any class action lawsuit about the rebate.



Your rebate — a paper check — may be mailed to you in a piece of junk mail. The retailer is hoping you will not open it and instead throw it away.



Beware of multiple rebates for the same item: the rebate process may be overly complicated and require separate mailings and different proofs of purchase.



Don't be surprised if for some items, the proof of purchase is hard to get at — you have to destroy the package to get at it — or it is hidden under a flap where you don't think to look.

Complaints should be directed to the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Team:

Consumer Protection
P.O. Box 30213
Lansing, MI 48909
517-335-7599
Fax: 517-241-3771
Toll free: 877-765-8388
[Online complaint form](#)

The Attorney General provides Consumer Alerts to inform the public of unfair, misleading, or deceptive business practices, and to provide information and guidance on other issues of concern. Consumer Alerts are not legal advice, legal authority, or a binding legal opinion from the Department of Attorney General.





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