

One Day Sales Advice to Consumers

What to look out for in an "auction" type of sale.

These are often advertised by a leaflet put through your letter box. Ironically, they often say "This is not an auction" or "This is a genuine rostrum sale". The sale does, however, follow a format which most people would describe as a "sort of auction".

1. Is the trader local? If not it may be difficult to obtain a refund or exchange goods at long distance.
2. Do you have a chance to inspect the goods before the sale? If not how can you be sure of their value to you?
3. Are the goods sold in lots of two or more items? If yes, then do you know exactly what the lot consists of? Has the seller actually spelled out what is in the lot? If not, how do you know you want it? If you really only want one of the items why buy the whole lot? (A "Lot" can be a single item or a group of items. The salesman may or may not use the term "lot").
4. If the trader will not give his name or address do not part with your money. A reputable trader will always give these details.
5. Do not part with your money for a lot you have not seen or inspected. Do not part with your money on a speculative bid (A pig in a poke). Don't be afraid to withdraw a bid if you think the goods are not worth the money.
6. Remember. Legitimate traders do not give things away. They do not offer ridiculously cheap bargains.
7. If the goods are of a well known brand but do not have the usual manufacturers packaging they may be seconds or catalogue returns. Always ask for a guarantee.
8. Above all do not get carried away with the prospect of a bargain. No one is in business to make a loss so ask yourself what is in it for him? when the seller says such things as:
 - "I'm giving these away";
 - "I'm making a loss on this";
 - "I just want to get rid of this"; or similar phrases.

All of these may be true but he MUST make a profit on the entire sale. If he gives away at the start he will almost certainly load his profit onto the end of the sale. This is when you must be most cautious.

9. If you do buy something that does not work or live up to the promises of the seller then complain to him as soon as possible,
10. If you do not get anywhere then contact Fife Trading Standards Service on 01592 414141, we may be able to help.

REMEMBER

The best way to avoid problems with goods bought from these sales is not to buy anything unless you have had a chance to inspect the goods first.

If you have the time to take a trip to the High Street first - do some window shopping to check prices.

If you go to a One Day Sale NEVER:

- assume that if early customers seem to get bargains, you will too.
- offer to buy goods you can't see, i.e. in a box or bin liner.
- panic and buy something because there are only a few left.
- buy a mystery or special gift you can't see.
- buy on the promise that you won't be disappointed.
- trust a salesman who keeps telling you to trust him.
- hand over a cheque or credit card without checking details and figures.
- assume branded goods are guaranteed and perfect.
- assume all goods work properly and have instructions.
- assume something that looks good from a distance is value for money.
- stop listening carefully to what is being said.