



Information Network Bulletin

October 2008



 brought to you by **Croydon Trading Standards** 



Beware of Bogus 'Charity' Collections

Trading Standards are warning the public to be wary of bogus charity clothing collections. Many genuine charities rely on such doorstep collections for a substantial proportion of their shop sales therefore by donating the items to these bogus charities, the genuine one will lose out.

We have had reports of householders receiving flyers through their letterboxes appealing for donations of unwanted clothes, footwear and sometimes other household and electrical items to be distributed to poor individuals and families in Eastern European or third world countries.

Consumers are asked to leave the goods in a plastic bag by the front door. These are later collected anonymously. The flyers are misleading as they give the impression that the items are being collected for charitable purposes. However, it seems that these collections are organised by commercial operators who sell the items for profit.

The flyer gives reference to a registration number, which people may think is that of a Registered Charity but is in fact a company number.

If the householder has any doubts about a leaflet asking for donations, they should:

- ❖ **Contact the Charity Commission helpline on 0845 3000 218 to check whether the collection or on behalf of a registered charity**
- ❖ **Contact the Advertising Standards Authority on telephone number 020 7492 2222 to stop this type of misleading advertising**
- ❖ **Give donations direct to a local charity shop instead or donate to a charity shop collection sack. These should make clear reference to the charity registration number and many may carry the Association of Charity Shops Kitemark.**

It can be difficult to track down the perpetrators and the best curb on such collections is to alert public that such practices of unscrupulous individuals and companies deprive genuine charities of their much needed income.



Beer and Wine Glass Trivia

You may have noticed that your beer or wine glass doesn't always have a crown symbol near the quantity marking.

If the beer or wine glass is used to measure your drink then the glass needs to be 'stamped'. Up to now the accuracy of the glass has been independently checked by trading standards and if the volume is correct the crown mark is applied.

But European law allows manufacturers to operate their own quality production and checking systems. If the system is a good one they will be given the authority to apply a 'CE' mark to show their glasses are of correct size.

Both the crown and 'CE' marks are usually associated with a number that relates to approval authority and a further mark to indicate the year of 'stamping', In the case of a 2008 produced 'CE' marked glass this shown by M08 in a box.

Some establishments now use plastic beer and wine glasses, and we have had queries that they were not 'stamped'. Customers may need to look on the base of the glass (ideally when empty) as the marking can be embossed into the plastic base.

Finally, the standard size for wine sold by the glass is 125ml, 175ml or multiples. Some restaurants use graduated carafes marked at 125, 175 and 250ml so customers can decide what measure is best for them.

Try Our Quick Quiz

1. **Which Ombudsman scheme is the largest in the World?**

The Financial Ombudsman Service.

2. **From which date will the Financial Services Authority and the Ombudsman Service regulate travel insurance sold alongside a holiday?**

1st January 2009.

3. **If an insurance company asks for documents that could not reasonably be considered relevant to a claim or fails to respond to pertinent correspondence which new regulations could have been breached?**

The Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008.

4. **Which insurance related scheme was set up to help victims of 'hit and run' drivers?**

The Untraced Drivers' Agreement administered by the Motor Insurers' Bureau provides for compensation to be paid in respect of personal injury and losses arising from that injury. It may also be possible to claim compensation for damage to property if the accident occurred on or after 14 February 2003.

5. **After a car accident can a car classed as a 'Category C' write off be repaired and put back on the road?**

Yes, it can, as it is deemed to be repairable but the cost of a repair organised by the insurer would exceed the pre accident value.

National Consumer Week

This year National Consumer Week will be held between **17-21 November 2008** and the theme is **"Be a Savvy Shopper this Christmas."**

Staff from Trading Standards will be hosting various road shows throughout Croydon to raise awareness of issues such as counterfeit goods and consumer rights and to give members of the public the chance to discuss any problems or concerns that they may have.

There will be a display stand, a range of helpful leaflets, and the staff will be taking the opportunity to offer advice and information, whether it's to do with understanding your rights when you're buying something, or highlighting issues such as doorstep sales, sales to the elderly and vulnerable groups and the problem of young people purchasing cigarettes and other age-controlled products.

Fireworks Enforcement 2008

Premises storing explosives (for example, fireworks and flares, air bag inflators) are required to either be registered or hold a storage licence. Registrations and storage licence's are valid for one year and expire at the end of September. This allows fireworks to be sold during the four seasonal occasions.

15th October to 10th November inclusive
26th December to 31st December inclusive
on the 1st day of the Chinese New Year and the 3 days immediately preceding it

On the day of Dawali and the 3 days immediately preceding it. To sell fireworks all year round a further firework supplier's licence is required.

Premises will usually need to be inspected by the Council before they can be registered or licensed. The inspection is made to find out if the premises are suitable for the storage of explosives and what precautions have been taken to ensure the safety of staff, customers and nearby residents. Prior to storing and selling fireworks, a risk assessment must be carried out in order to determine what actions to take to prevent a fire starting, stop it spreading and protect people in the event of a fire.

Premises selling fireworks must display a large (A3) notice stating "It is illegal to sell adult fireworks to anyone under the age of 18" and "It is illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to possess adult fireworks in a public place".

Further information on selling of fireworks is available on Croydon Council's website at the following link -

<http://www.croydon.gov.uk/business/licences/explosives>

The Cancellation of Contracts

The Cancellation of Contracts made in a Consumer's home or place of work etc Regulations (2008) give you protection when you buy goods or services from a trader on the doorstep or in the home (or in someone else's home), at your place of work, or when you buy from a trader on an excursion they have arranged away from their business premises.

If you change your mind about a purchase **above the value of £35**, you have at least seven calendar days to cancel the contract (the 'cooling-off' period). **It does not matter whether you invited a trader into your home or not** - the Regulations cover both solicited (invited) and unsolicited (uninvited visits or 'cold calling').

A trader must advise you **in writing** that you can cancel the contract – this information must usually be set out in your contract and should be legible and have equal prominence to any other part of the agreement. If there is no written contract, you must still be given this information in writing at the time you agree.

If you are not given this information in writing the trader can't hold you to anything in the contract. The trader may also be guilty of a criminal offence. For further information contact Consumer Direct on 08454 04 05 06.

