

Holiday Shopping Guide

Is A Sale Price Your Best Deal?

(NAPSA)—With consumers soon to be blanketed by pre-holiday sales, holiday sales and post-holiday sales, the trick is to make sure the deal you're getting is really the best deal. To help you get the most for you money, the Federal Trade Commission offers these tips:

- **Shop around.** A "sale" price isn't always the "best" price. Some merchants may offer the sale price on the item you want for a limited time; other merchants may discount the item you want every day. Also, when you're comparison shopping, make sure you have: the item's manufacturer, model number and stock number or other identifying information.

- **Read sales ads carefully.** Some may say "quantities limited," or "not available at all stores." Before you step out the door, call ahead to make sure the merchant has the item you want in stock.

- **Take time and travel costs into consideration.** If an item is on sale, but it's all the way across town, how much are you really saving once you factor in your time and the costs of transportation and parking?

- **Look for price-matching policies.** Some merchants will match, or even beat, their competitors' prices. Read the merchant's pricing policy carefully. It may not apply to all items.

- **Go online.** Check out Internet sites that compare prices for items offered online. Some sites also may compare prices offered at stores in your area. If you decide



If you buy something and it goes on sale the next week, you may be able to get a credit or refund for the discounted amount.

to buy online, keep shipping costs and delivery time in mind.

- **Carefully consider bargain offers** that are based on purchases of additional merchandise. For example, "buy one, get one free" or "free gift with purchase." If you don't really want or need the item, it's not a deal.

- **Ask about refund and return policies for sales items.** Merchants may have different refund and return policies for sales items, especially clearance merchandise.

For more information on holiday shopping, visit www.ftc.gov. The FTC works for the consumer to prevent fraudulent, deceptive and unfair business practices and to provide information to help consumers spot, stop and avoid them. To file a complaint, call 1-877-FTC-HELP.