

## State Department Federal Credit Union Topics of Interest

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### Smart Shopping Pays

“Grant me profits only, grant me the joy of profit made, and see to it that I enjoy cheating the buyer”

-- Ovid 43 B.C.

The ancient Roman poet Ovid may have celebrated unscrupulous business practices, but most consumers do not. Follow the tips below to help you get the most out of your shopping dollars.

Become an advertising critic. Advertisers may use “puffing” to sell a product - a practice that legally allows a certain amount of exaggeration. Therefore, an advertisement for face cream may claim to give your skin a youthful radiance, but it can’t promise to shed 20 years from your appearance overnight, unless it actually can (highly doubtful).

Buy rationally. Compare the prices at multiple places before making a major purchase and avoid impulse buying. Question your need and desire for each item. Avoid shopping when you are hungry, tired, depressed, rushed, or distracted.

Be on-guard when online. Only buy from secure Internet sites (particularly if you are paying with a credit card) and read the privacy policy. Review return, refund, and shipping and handling policies. As with any delivered item, request that the shipper receive a signature before leaving a package on your doorstep, or have it delivered to your office.

Know the warranty. Some are verbal (usually worthless, unfortunately), some implied (that your refrigerator will indeed keep food cold), and some are written. Federal law does not require written warranties, but most come with major purchases. Understand it and save it in a safe place. “Extended warranties” are actually service contracts that you have to pay for (warranties are free). To determine if you really need one, weigh the cost of the service contract against projected maintenance and repair bills.

Nervous about a purchase? Check with the Better Business Bureau for past complaints against a seller or manufacturer before you buy. Happy Shopping!

*As a credit union member, you have access to BALANCE, a financial fitness program dedicated to helping you achieve your goals. For more information, call them toll free at 888-456-2227 or visit <http://www.balancepro.net/sdfcu>.*