



FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

Consumer Information

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# Happy holidays! Shopping tips from the FTC

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The gift-giving season is just around the corner, and the gift-buying season starts, oh, any minute now. The FTC has an early gift for you — tips to help you shop wisely and protect your personal information.

- Make a list **and** a budget (<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0498-its-never-too-early-or-too-late-save>). Remember incidentals, like cards and wrapping paper.
- Check out websites that compare (<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0027-comparing-products-online>) prices for things sold online, and at stores in your area. It can help you get the best deal.
- Make sure the scanned price is right. Overcharges cost you money and time, especially if you don't notice them right away.
- Look for rebates (<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0096-rebates>). Some can be redeemed at checkout, but most require you to send documentation to the manufacturer to get your rebate.
- Read reviews and recommendations (<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0027-comparing-products-online#read%20reviews%20and%20be%20skeptical>) to see how the product performs — or people's experience with an online seller. But remember to consider the source.
- Be aware that shopping apps (<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0515-apps-help-you-shop-stores#personal-info>) can collect a lot of personal information. Look for apps that tell you what they do with your data, and how they keep it secure.
- Check the terms of the deal when buying online — including delivery dates and refund policies. Will it arrive in time? And, if it's not what you thought, can you send it back?
- Save receipts. When you're shopping online (<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0020-shopping-online>), keep copies of your order number, the refund and return policies, shipping costs and warranties.
- Giving bling? Take some time to learn the terms used in the jewelry industry (<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0045-buying-jewelry>) so you can get the best quality and value.

- Shipping to loved ones overseas? Check the US Postal Service's calendar for holiday shipping deadlines ([http://about.usps.com/news/national-releases/2018/pr18\\_083.htm](http://about.usps.com/news/national-releases/2018/pr18_083.htm)).
- Have packages delivered to a secure location. If you won't be home, have them delivered to work, or see if a neighbor can be on the look-out for deliveries. Consider requiring a signature for delivery — or look for options to pick up your shipment at a local store or mailing center.

For more information, check out our Shopping & Saving (<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/topics/shopping-saving>) page.

Blog Topics: Money & Credit (<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/money-%26-credit>), Shopping & Saving (<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/shopping-%26-saving>)