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department of
Economic, Small Business Development,
Tourism and Environmental Affairs
FREE STATE PROVINCE

MEDIA STATEMENT

CONSUMER PROTECTION OFFICE SAVES CONSUMERS THEIR HARD EARNED MONEY

19 MAY 2022

Bloemfontein: Consumer rights are constitutional rights and the Consumer Protection Office in the Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs is working hard to ensure that these rights are not violated.

The Consumer Protection Office is mandated by the Government of the Free State province through the Unfair Business Practices Act No. 14 of 1998 that became active from the 1st of April 2011 to protect consumers.

The act protects consumers from any unethical business practice, which may be any improper prejudice suffered by complainant or another person as a result of unfair business practice/s including improper enrichment, receipt of improper advantage and dishonesty.

The Consumer Protector has the power to investigate and prosecute complaints lodged in the Consumer Protection Office before Free State Consumer Court.

Unaware of their rights and the Consumer Protection Act, many consumers fall prey to unscrupulous business owners who still get away with providing substandard services or goods to unsuspecting consumers on a daily basis.

Since February 2019 to date, the Consumer Protection Office, through the Consumer Court, resolved cases worth R1, 086 136.41, which is the money that was returned back into the pockets of consumers.

Motor vehicles cases top the list of grievances that were resolved, followed by rental property, funeral parlour, household electric appliances, cellphones, furniture, etc. With motor vehicles, dealers fail to provide after-sales service and documents to consumers, which results in consumers failing to produce proof of purchase or payment, ownership of products and agreement contract. With regard to furniture and electrical appliances, dealers sell defective goods to consumers and refuse to take them back. With cell phones, the problem is hidden costs charged by the dealer, therefore resulting in consumers having to pay excessive charges which they did not agree on.



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Consumers should note that the services of the Consumer Protection Office are speedy and free of charge and consumer court sittings rotates in all the 5 districts of the Free State Province.

DESTEA once again invite everybody who has a reason to believe that his/her consumer rights have been infringed to contact the Consumer Protection Office. Complaints can be lodged telephonically, written either by fax/post or in person. Consumers can also look for more information on the departmental website.

Consumers can complain if the dealer does not want to refund them when goods do not perform according to the standards that the customers were made to believe they would, the goods are faulty and the customers were not aware or advised of the fault/s during the time of purchase, the goods are not the same as those shown to the customers prior to delivery of the goods and if the goods are not as described.

For more information please contact Consumer Protection Office at:

Physical Address: 113 St. Andrew Street, Bloemfontein, 9300
Postal Address: Private Bag X 20801, Bloemfontein, 9300
Tel: 051 400 9656/ 9611/4857/ 4854/ 4855/ 9612/ 4856.
Fax: 086 514 6112
e-complaint system: Access e-government portal through the e-services
URL www.eservices.gov.za
E-mail: radikelt@destea.gov.za
Website: www.destea.gov.za

End!

Compiled by Communication Unit

Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs

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