

Online shopping is risky business, says NCCC

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The centre will suggest amendments to outdated laws and a government campaign to educate online shoppers on their rights.

PETALING JAYA: The National Consumer Complaints Centre (NCCC) is seeking improved legal protection for online shoppers as one of several measures aimed at reducing the risks involved in e-commerce.

NCCC Legal and Policy Executive Shabana Naseer Ahmad told a press conference today that the bulk of complaints received by the organisation in the last two years concerned experiences with online shopping.

It looks like the risk associated with online shopping is higher compared to traditional shopping, she said.

We received 7,641 complaints in 2014 involving losses amounting to millions of ringgit. We're in the midst of preparing the data for 2015 but I can assure you that the highest number of complaints we received were still regarding e-commerce and our forecast is that it will be the same for 2016 as well.

The data for 2014 showed that the top three complaints pertaining to online shopping were late delivery of purchased goods (51.8%), problems associated with returning wrongly described or faulty products (19.1%) and poor product quality (8.1%).

According to Shabana, in some cases the products weren't delivered at all.

She estimated that the actual losses suffered were much higher than indicated in the data because not all affected shoppers would have lodged complaints against online merchants.

Many consumers are ignorant of their rights, she said. Many also do not realise the potential problems that can arise from e-commerce. They fail to understand that any contract becomes enforceable once they have agreed to its terms and conditions.

She said NCCC would be submitting a memorandum to the government to suggest amendments to outdated laws and to call for a campaign to educate online shoppers on their rights.

NCCC will also be publishing guides on online purchasing.

Brochures containing simple guidelines and best practices to be adopted in order to avoid becoming victims will be circulated to the public, Shabana said.