

Frustration builds over refunds from online shopping platforms

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PETALING JAYA: When Leona Lopez received her bulk order of household products from an online shopping platform, she was surprised to find some of the items damaged.

Lopez said it was difficult to get a refund or have her items replaced as it took days for a seller to reply to her inquiries and, usually, there would be no satisfactory solution.

◆ When I tried returning just one item, I was told it was rejected and they (online shopping platform) would return the item to me. I was confused. Would they send me back a new item or the damaged one? ◆ she asked.

She said that with the pandemic, many have resorted to buying items online as they do not want to risk going out.

◆ When we purchase items online, we hope that they come as per the image shown on the site, ◆ she said.

Recently, she said, she had purchased a mountain bike hub and when it arrived, the front hub was damaged, and her refund request is still under review.

She said it is frustrating when this happens, especially when sellers do not pack their items properly.

◆ I am sure I am not the only one experiencing this. I just hope that shopping online platforms can assist and protect their buyers. We should not be forced to accept wrong items or damaged ones, ◆ she said.

Federation of Malaysian Consumers Associations (Fomca) CEO Saravanan Thambirajah said it has received many complaints on such issues since the movement control order (MCO) was implemented.

Saravanan said Fomca has received about 380 complaints this year.

◆ One of the common complaints is on customer service. There are cases where consumers have to file the same complaint a few times before they are heard, ◆ he told FMT.

He said online shopping platforms should appoint customer care consultants to look into the complaints rather than use automated machines.

Saravanan also said another problem is improper handling by courier companies.

◆ The Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), which oversees the courier services, should regulate the sector and provide feedback regarding complaints, ◆ he said.

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justify;">On what consumers can do, he said they should lodge a report with the online shopping platform if they encounter a problem or are not satisfied with an item.</p> <p style="text-align: justify;">If there is no response from the platform, they may file a report with the domestic trade and consumer affairs ministry or the Tribunal for Consumer Claims.</p> <p style="text-align: justify;">Receipts, communication history and payment details should be retained for submission to these bodies, and a review posted on the seller's page so other consumers are aware of the issue.</p> <p style="text-align: justify;">Malaysia Consumers Movement (MCM) secretary-general Sukhdave Singh said complaints have increased during the pandemic as more rely on online purchases and delivery.</p> <p style="text-align: justify;">◆Consumers must ensure that they only use reliable online platforms when making purchases.</p> <p style="text-align: justify;">◆It is important to do background checks on random sites. This is not difficult as information is readily available on the internet,◆ he told FMT.</p> <p style="text-align: justify;">Sukhdave said online shopping platforms should ensure that there is a proper redress mechanism in place should a consumer file a complaint.</p> <p style="text-align: justify;">◆It is easier to deal with reputable sellers but the problem arises when it involves smaller companies, especially those based overseas,◆ he said.</p> <p style="text-align: justify;">◆Online shopping firms should have information on all the companies allowed to trade on their platforms.◆</p> <p>◆</p> <p style="text-align: justify;">Source: https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/08/06/frustration-builds-over-refunds-from-online-shopping-platforms/</p>