



Government
of Canada

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du Canada

**BE A SMART
SHOPPER:**

*Make Sure
You Pay the
Right Price*

<http://competition.ic.gc.ca>

Canada



COMPETITION
BUREAU

What Is the Competition Act?

The *Competition Act* (the Act) is a federal law governing business conduct in Canada and is enforced by the Competition Bureau (the Bureau). It aims to promote competition in the marketplace by stopping anti-competitive practices. Most businesses in Canada, both small and large, are governed by this Act.

The Commissioner of Competition (the Commissioner) is head of the Bureau, which is part of Industry Canada. The Commissioner is responsible for the administration and enforcement of the *Competition Act*, as well as three statutes concerning the accuracy and adequacy of information provided to consumers:

- the *Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act*
- the *Textile Labelling Act*
- the *Precious Metals Marking Act*.

What Is a Universal Product Code?

From lollipops to laundry detergent, most everyday items bear a unique Universal Product Code (UPC). It looks like this:



Many stores in Canada make use of these codes to record sales. Each cash register is connected with the store's computer, which holds the price and other product information linked to each code.

When a cashier passes the UPC symbol on a package over an electronic scanner, a beam of light "reads" the symbol. The computer decodes the symbol and sends the price to the cash register. The cash register then prints the price on a receipt for the consumer and also shows it on the cash register display screen.

Is the Scanned Price Always Right?

Mistakes sometimes happen. If not detected, you could be paying more than you should.

The store may have recently adjusted its prices in its computer but failed or lacked time to post the new prices on the shelves. You should pay the lower price. Ask the cashier or manager to make an adjustment.

You can be on your guard by checking that the price shown on the display screen is the price you expect you should be paying.



What Measures Can I Take?

Although the electronic scanner rings up your purchases very quickly, it is still possible for you to spot pricing errors at the register. Here's how.

Watch the display screen for prices. If you think you are being overcharged for a product, speak up right away. Check the store's policy on pricing errors. When you spot an error, ask the cashier to correct it before you pay.

Bring a copy of the store's flyer or newspaper ad to the checkout counter. Some advertised discounts may not be recorded in the computer. The special

price may have to be entered manually by the cashier. You can help the cashier by drawing attention to these specially priced items.

Note prices or special discounts as you walk through the store. You may want to jot down the posted prices on packages or on a separate piece of paper to compare with the register display. If the store adds a sticker offering a special discount, make sure it is facing up when you pass the item to the cashier.

Read your receipt before you walk away. If you notice an error, ask the cashier to adjust the total. If you have already left the cashier's lane, see the store or department manager or the customer service department to correct any mistakes.

What Else Can I Do?

If you notice a pattern of electronic scanning errors in a particular store, talk to the customer service department or the store manager. You may also want to write a letter to the store's head office. The retailer may not realize a problem exists until it is pointed out.

You also may report recurring problems to your local **Fair Business Practices Branch** office. Check the Blue Pages of your telephone directory under Government of Canada or Industry Canada. Or you may contact one of the following regional offices.

Toll free	1-800-348-5358
Pacific Region (British Columbia and Yukon)	(604) 666-5000
Prairie Region (Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Northwest Territories)	(204) 983-8905
Ontario Region	(416) 973-5000
Quebec Region	(514) 283-3109
Atlantic Region (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland)	(902) 426-6055

E-mail:

fbpinfo@ic.gc.ca

Web Site:

<http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/FBP>

INDUSTRY CANADA / INDUSTRIE CANADA



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The Bureau conducts its investigations in private and keeps confidential the identity of the source and the information provided. However, if someone has important evidence about an offence under the Act, that person may be asked to testify in court.

The Bureau produces videos and publications on various aspects of the Competition Act, the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act, the Textile Labelling Act and the Precious Metals Marking Act. To find out more about our videos and publications, contact the Information Centre at:

Information Centre
Competition Bureau
Industry Canada
50 Victoria Street
Hull QC K1A 0C9

Toll free: 1-800-348-5358
National Capital Region: (819) 997-4282
TDD (for hearing impaired): 1-800-642-3844
Fax: (819) 997-0324

E-mail: compbureau@ic.gc.ca
Web site: <http://competition.ic.gc.ca>

This publication is only a guide. It provides basic information about the Competition Bureau and the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act. For further information, you should refer to the full text of this Act or contact the Competition Bureau at one of the numbers listed above.

This publication has been prepared by the Fair Business Practices Branch with the assistance of the Consumers' Association of Canada. It is modelled on the bulletin "Attention All Shoppers: Make Sure the Scanned Price is Right," with the cooperation of the U.S. Federal Trade Commission.