

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Bag Searches

Many stores now display signs advising customers they may be asked to show the contents of their bags prior to leaving the store. If the trader exercises this request both the trader and the consumer have certain rights and obligations.

The main reason so many stores display signs advising customers they may be asked to show the contents of their bags prior to leaving is the dramatic increase in shoplifting.

The sign must be clearly displayed so it is seen by the consumer prior to entering the shop. If the consumer does not agree to a potential bag search, he or she should not enter the store.

If you are asked to show the contents of your bag and you agree to the request, the trader has no right to touch the contents of your bag or to put their hand into your bag.

The trader or employee may only look into your bag.

The consumer does have the right to refuse the request. If the consumer refuses the request, the trader is not entitled to force a search.

A shop is private property (not a public place) so the trader does have the right to politely ask you to leave the store and refuse to sell you any goods.

The trader can call the police if there is reason to believe you have committed an offence.

If you don't agree with the store policy then you should not enter the store.

For further information contact Consumer Affairs

Old Admiralty Towers, 68 The Esplanade, GPO Box 1722, Darwin NT 0801
Ph: 08 8999 1999 - Fax: 08 8935 7727

or

Level 1, Belvedere House, Parsons Street, PO Box 1745 Alice Springs NT 0871
Telephone: 08 8951 8606 Fax: 08 8951 5442

or phone 1800 019 319

Email: consumer@nt.gov.au

Web site: consumeraffairs.nt.gov.au

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