

Save Receipts and Proof of Purchase

When they first came on the market, we bought a pack of low-energy light globes. Aside from the savings on power, they were claimed to last many times longer than the incandescent type. Well, they didn't! One burned out in a matter of weeks, and the replacement didn't fare much better. Unfortunately, we hadn't bothered saving the receipt because it was just a till-roll docket. Also, as we'd paid cash, there was no proof of purchase on the credit-card statement. Pretty sure where we bought them, we returned to the store and were told: "No, you couldn't have got them from us – we've never stocked that brand." Somewhat puzzled, we tried two other stores, the only ones we were likely to have purchased the globes from. Same result – both denied responsibility. Needless to say, we were rather annoyed and out of pocket.

Usually, we keep most receipts, especially those for high-priced items; and particularly when a warranty is involved. A recent purchase, however, has reminded us to be extra careful with everything we buy. It was just a packet of cashew nuts bought along with some groceries. They tasted awful; but, once again, the docket had been binned. In this instance, we were lucky following an on-line complaint to the supplier who graciously agreed to mail a replacement. Such is not always the case. And it doesn't need a long-winded article to get this point across.

No-one can afford to throw money away. My best advice is to keep those receipts. Even sale items and specials are subject to the same laws as any other goods. Marked-down food which is approaching its use-by date is no different. Don't forget the dry-cleaning tickets; and if the conditions on the back say any loss or damage is not their responsibility, in most cases the law will disagree! Proof of purchase will usually be required when returning faulty goods to the place they were bought; and it will certainly have to accompany items returned for repair under warranty. Repairs and renovations to the home, carpet cleaning, and auto repairs carried out by trades people and companies should be properly billed and receipted. If not, and there's a problem down the track, without that precious piece of paper, recompense may be difficult or impossible.

Tenants in a rental situation need to be especially mindful. Materials acquired for repairs or replacements which are the landlord's responsibility may not be reimbursed unless there are receipts to support purchases. Even receipts for utility charges, whether paid to the rental agent or the supplier of the service, should be retained in case of dispute. As the consumer, you are protected by law; but without those dockets and receipts, you may be lucky to get more than a surly 'see-you-later'.

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