

Consumer Affairs

& Fair Trading



Facts & Information

Bag Inspections

Bag inspections when you leave a Shop

It can be embarrassing and frustrating to have your bag searched in a store. It is therefore important to know that both you and the shop owner have rights. It is for this reason that a Bag Check Code of Practice for the checking of bags and parcels in retail stores has been developed. It explains principles and practices for shoppers and retailers so that each knows their rights and responsibilities when inspecting, and being subjected to the inspection of, bags and parcels.

While the Code is not law, many of the principles are an explanation of people's rights.

The Code Explained

If a storeowner wishes to reserve the right to inspect bags, a sign should be displayed near the entrance to the shop. By seeing the sign, the customer is assumed to have accepted these conditions and staff can ask to see the contents of your bag before you leave the shop.



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However this does not give staff the right to touch the contents of your bag or to put their hand in your bag. There should be no direct physical interference by the shopkeeper or employee.

You cannot be forced to allow the inspection, however if you refuse to allow staff of the shop to inspect your bag you may be asked to leave.

You may not be allowed to come back to the shop unless you agree to the store's policy on bag inspections.

Shoplifting

Shoplifting is a growing problem for many stores. That is why a number of stores now display signs telling customers that they may be asked to show the contents of their bags when leaving the store.

The cost of shoplifting is passed on to customers in higher prices. If everyone paid for goods that leave shops, we would all pay less.

CONTACT DETAILS

Department of Justice
Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading
15 Murray Street
HOBART TAS 7000
Telephone: 1300 654 499
Facsimile: 03 6233 4882
Email: consumer.affairs@justice.tas.gov.au
Website: www.consumer.tas.gov.au