

**DCA HOLDS 2nd ANNUAL CITYWIDE 'BUSINESS EDUCATION DAY'
TO INFORM BUSINESSES ON CONSUMER PROTECTION LAWS**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Teams of Staff from the DCA and the Dept. of Small Business Services, Elected Officials, and Business Organizations Blanket Targeted Neighborhoods in Every Borough

New York City Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) Commissioner Gretchen Dykstra, joined by New York City Department of Small Business Services (SBS) Commissioner Robert Walsh, today kicked off DCA's 2nd Annual 'Business Education Day' in East Harlem to aggressively educate local businesses about the City's Consumer Protection Laws. DCA and SBS staff, along with elected officials and neighborhood organizations, visited ten targeted neighborhoods citywide, meeting with managers, explaining the laws and business assistance programs, and distributing thousands of informational materials to retailers and service companies in all five boroughs -- without issuing violations.

"Today we're building on last year's successful efforts, pounding the pavement to reach out and aggressively educate City businesses about the Consumer Protection Law," said DCA Commissioner Gretchen Dykstra. "As part of DCA's 2nd Annual 'Business Education Day' we have dedicated dozens of staff to target ten neighborhoods citywide. It is imperative that all businesses, not just the 60,000 that are licensed, are fully aware of their responsibilities and of required guidelines for protecting consumers. When businesses know the rules it makes it easier to be in compliance, helping them thrive and keeping the marketplace honest for consumers."

"This is yet another example of Mayor Bloomberg's commitment to the small business community," said Commissioner Walsh. "New York City's more than 200,000 small businesses dominate every sector and shoulder the lion's share of the City's economy, accounting for 98 percent of all businesses and more than half of the private sector workforce. By reaching out to them this way, we can give them the information they need to succeed, grow and continue to comprise such a pivotal role."

Neighborhoods visited include East Harlem, Flatbush Avenue and Williamsburg in Brooklyn, E. 167th and 233rd Street in the Bronx, Midtown Manhattan, 37th and Roosevelt Avenues in Jackson Heights and Jamaica, Queens, and Hylan and Victory Blvd. in Staten Island. DCA distributed materials outlining the following guidelines for businesses:

- Businesses that require a license.
- Rules regarding refund policy, receipts, contracts, special offers, layaway plans, food labeling, and sale of used items.
- Guidelines for weighing merchandise.
- Requirements for advertising or displays.
- Items that are illegal to sell to minors.
- Guidelines for selling/delivering furniture.
- Guidelines for gas stations, tobacco retailers, jewelry stores, car rentals, funeral homes, tax preparers, laundries, appliance service dealers, and travel agencies.
- Information about free classes on expanding a business and sources of financing.
- Resources for navigating government services, resolving issues with City agencies, and emergency assistance.

Copies of all brochures including What Retailers Need to Know and What Service Companies Need to Know are available by calling 311, online at www.nyc.gov/consumers, or by contacting local organizations and Business Improvement Districts. Information on services offered by SBS is available at www.nyc.gov/sbs.

DCA's enforcement team has streamlined operations, creating four borough offices in Manhattan, Brooklyn/Staten Island, Queens, and the Bronx, allowing staff to work closely with Community Boards and other City agencies to coordinate efforts and respond to complaints quickly. DCA inspectors have been cross-trained in a number of areas including routine testing of scales, consumer protection violations, sidewalk cafes, peddlers, license checks, and other areas.

DCA enforces the Consumer Protection Laws and other related laws at thousands of businesses throughout New York City. Fostering a marketplace where consumers are protected and businesses can thrive, DCA licenses more than 60,000 businesses in 55 different categories. Through free community seminars, licensing forums, and other informational materials, DCA educates consumers and businesses alike about their rights and responsibilities.

The Department of Small Business Services makes it easier for companies in New York City to form, do business and grow by providing direct assistance to business owners, fostering neighborhood development in commercial districts, promoting financial and economic opportunity among minority- and women-owned businesses, preparing New Yorkers for jobs and linking employers with a skilled and qualified workforce.