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## **DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS (DCA) EMPLOYEES TAKE TO THE STREETS TO ISSUE ADVICE TO LOCAL BUSINESSES, NOT VIOLATIONS**

### ***DCA's 8th Annual "Business Education Day" Visits Businesses in 17 Retail Areas Citywide***

New York City Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) Commissioner Jonathan Mintz joined DCA teams today on the Lower East Side to kick off the agency's 8th annual *Business Education Day*. Throughout the day, DCA staff, elected officials and representatives from Small Business Services (SBS), local community and businesses associations went door-to-door to educate businesses in all five boroughs about key consumer protection laws-without issuing violations.

"We are committed to making it easier for businesses to do business, particularly when it comes to doing right by their customers," said Commissioner Mintz. "By conducting efforts like our annual *Business Education Day*, DCA has helped educate thousands of businesses so they can avoid fines and better serve the New York City consumers who can make their businesses a success."

DCA hosts *Business Education Day* annually to share compliance tips with New York City businesses instead of issuing fines or violations. This year, DCA inspectors were joined by dozens of DCA outreach staff, representatives from the Department of Small Business Services (SBS), community organizations, business associations and elected officials, and visited more than [1,500] businesses in high-traffic retail areas across the City. *Business Education Day* teams visit local businesses to point out what could be potential violations, but do not issue violations or fines. Instead, DCA advises owners on how to comply with New York City consumer protection laws and answers any questions business owners and managers may have.

DCA visited more than 27 New York City neighborhoods this year in all five boroughs including:

- Manhattan-Washington Heights, Inwood, East Harlem, Upper West Side, Lower East Side, Midtown
- Queens- Corona, East Elmhurst, Elmhurst, Howard Beach, Ozone Park, Jackson Heights, Woodside
- Brooklyn- Midwood, Flatbush, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Clinton Hill, Bushwick, Williamsburg
- Bronx- Pelham Parkway, Belmont, Norwood, Bedford Park, Kingsbridge Heights
- Staten Island- New Springville, Greenridge, Eltingville

*Business Education Day* teams also distributed relevant compliance materials in multiple languages, including DCA's [10 Things Every Business Should Know](#) (in [PDF](#)). Free copies are available by calling 311 or going online to [nyc.gov/consumers](http://nyc.gov/consumers). Businesses were also encouraged use DCA's online [Business Toolbox](#), which makes available in one place all the important information and resources for new and existing businesses. New York place all the important information and resources for new and existing businesses. New York business owners in all 55 of the industries DCA licenses can also now access licensing services online at [nyc.gov/consumers](http://nyc.gov/consumers).

DCA enforces the Consumer Protection Law and other related business laws throughout New York City. Ensuring a fair and vibrant marketplace for consumers and businesses, DCA licenses more than 71,000 businesses in 55 different industries. Through targeted outreach, partnerships with community and trade organizations, and informational materials, DCA educates consumers and businesses alike about their rights and responsibilities. DCA's Office of Financial Empowerment (OFE) is the first local government initiative in the nation with a mission to educate, empower, and protect New Yorkers with low incomes so they can build assets and make the most of their financial resources. Toward that end, OFE seeks to increase access to high-quality, low-cost financial education and counseling; improve access to income-boosting tax credits; connect households to safe and affordable banking and asset-building products and services; and enforce and improve consumer protections to enhance financial stability. For more information, call 311 or visit DCA online at [nyc.gov/consumers](http://nyc.gov/consumers).

## 10 THINGS EVERY BUSINESS SHOULD KNOW

1. **Laws.** DCA enforces the City's Licensing, Consumer Protection, and Weights and Measures Laws, as well as many state laws. The Department provides free business guides and other information about these laws on [www.nyc.gov/consumers](http://www.nyc.gov/consumers), giving local businesses easy access to the rules they need to know. Many materials can also be requested by calling 311.
2. **Licensing.** DCA licenses 57 industries in New York City including debt collectors, home improvement contractors and used car dealers. Always contact DCA to see if your business requires a license. If so, the license must be posted in a place that is visible to customers. Businesses can download license applications at [www.nyc.gov/consumers](http://www.nyc.gov/consumers).
3. **Enforcement.** DCA inspects thousands of local businesses every year to ensure compliance with City laws and regulations. The Department also responds to consumer complaints and investigates deceptive advertisements.
4. **Refund rules.** All New York City businesses must post their refund policies at the cash register where customers can read them without difficulty. The refund policy should explain the details that limit the return such as time limits, required photo ID, or other special conditions. When a refund policy is not posted, the business must give a full refund on demand by law.
5. **Receipts.** All receipts in New York City must include business name, address, license number (where applicable), a list of itemized purchases and a separate statement of tax. Businesses must provide a receipt for any sale of \$20 or more, and upon request for any sale from \$5 up to \$20.
6. **Posting prices.** A business with annual volume of \$2 million or more must post the prices of their goods and services, as described in the City's Consumer Protection Law. Pricing items differently based on gender, such as haircuts or dry cleaning, is illegal.
7. **Weights and measures.** DCA inspects store scales to make sure they are balanced. Scales must be positioned so consumers can view weight information regarding the price per pound. The weight of the item, or "tare," must be subtracted from the cost of the weighed item.
8. **Selling tobacco products.** All stores selling tobacco must be licensed by DCA. Merchants caught selling to children under the age of 18 on more than two occasions within a 2-year period risk high fines and losing their City license, state registration and lottery license.
9. **Violations and penalties.** When DCA finds that a business has violated the law, the business can be fined. In some cases of repeat or egregious violations, the Department can revoke the business' license or padlock the premises. Businesses may have the right to a hearing before an administrative law judge when issued a violation. The violation notice will include a date of that hearing, and how to proceed if you choose to settle

before the hearing.

10. **Resolving complaints.** DCA always contacts businesses when a consumer files a complaint against them. Often complaints are settled right away through mediation. If mediation is unsuccessful or a business is unresponsive, charges may be brought to obtain consumer restitution and fines.