

August 5, 2003

CONSUMER AFFAIRS HOLDS CITYWIDE 'BUSINESS EDUCATION DAY' TO INFORM BUSINESSES ON CONSUMER PROTECTION LAWS

***Teams of DCA Staff, Elected Officials, and Business Organizations
Distribute Thousands of Materials in Targeted Neighborhoods***

New York City Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) Commissioner Gretchen Dykstra, joined by Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz, Albert Laboz of the Fulton Mall BID, and Michael Weiss of the MetroTech BID, today kicked off DCA's 'Business Education Day' to inform local businesses about the City's Consumer Protection Law and other related laws. DCA staff, along with elected officials and neighborhood organizations, visited ten targeted neighborhoods citywide, distributing thousands of informational materials to retailers and service companies in all five boroughs without issuing violations.

"Today we're pounding the pavement, reaching out to educate City businesses about the Consumer Protection Law which will better protect consumers," said DCA Commissioner Gretchen Dykstra. "As part of 'Business Education Day' we have dedicated dozens of DCA 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 the City's guidelines for protecting consumers. Violations can bring serious penalties and we are making a strong effort to make it easy to be in compliance."

"This is a great opportunity for businesses in Brooklyn to get a hands on education by learning what you should and shouldn't do when it comes to dealing with customers and learning how to appropriately comply with a variety of City rules and regulations," Borough President Markowitz said. "Getting and understanding all of this important information now should help to prevent problems in the future."

"We're pleased that the Department of Consumer Affairs has chosen Fulton Mall, the City's premier shopping district, to launch its business education program," said Albert Laboz, Chairman of the Fulton Mall BID. "We look forward to working together cooperatively to educate local businesses."

Neighborhoods visited include Delancey Street on Manhattan's Lower East Side, 181st Street in Washington Heights, 149th Street and Kingsbridge Road in the Bronx, Fulton Street and Sunset Park in Brooklyn, Myrtle Avenue and Steinway in Queens, and New Dorp Lane 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.**

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.

In addition, DCA has streamlined its enforcement team, 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 will be 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.