

CAERPHILY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
DIRECTORATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT
TRADING STANDARDS SERVICE

CAR BOOT SALES

GUIDANCE FOR CONSUMERS

Car boot sales are an easy way for people to clear unwanted items, whilst at the same time making a little money. As well as offering bargains for buyers, boot sales are "green", They encourage the recycling of goods. Car boot sales should be enjoyable for all. This leaflet provides advice which should help to ensure that you get a fair deal at car boot sales. Car boot sales have a lot to offer consumers. However, as with other purchasing decisions, it is important to be fully informed beforehand. Before committing yourself take time to consider the following:

ARE YOU DEALING WITH A TRADER OR PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL?

You have more consumer rights when dealing with a trader. Goods sold by a trader must be:

- as described
- of satisfactory quality and
- fit for their purpose

Private individuals have only to ensure that goods sold are as described. The nature of car boot sales means that it is not always easy to distinguish traders and private sellers who are just cleaning out unwanted goods. However, some traders will display a sign giving their proper name and address. Others might be identifiable because they are solely selling new goods or because they are specialising in certain items.

Whilst, in theory you enjoy greater protection when dealing with a trader, obtaining redress for faulty goods may still be very *difficult*. Car boot sales are not permanent fixtures. There is no guarantee that any seller (either trader or private individual) will be there next time.

In short, examine goods carefully before buying. It will probably not be easy to follow up a complaint after the day of the sale.

ARE THE GOODS SAFE?

Electrical Goods

- Beware of three core main leads which are not the standard green/ yellow (earth), blue (neutral), and brown (live). Also avoid single insulated cords. Leads should be checked to make sure they are not worn, broken or cut.
- Plugs should be marked as being BS and BEAB, BSI or ASTA approved with insulation on live and neutral pins. You should also check that the cord grip is fitted correctly.
- Make sure that guards and other safety devices are fitted and working thereby providing adequate protection against potential hazards.
- Given the potential risk, it may be advisable to have any appliance checked out by a competent electrician before use.

Toys

- It should not be possible to remove eyes and other small parts. They may cause a choking hazard for young children if you can. Also remember to check for sharp points and edges. Beware of damaged toys which could have a potential safety hazard which was not present when the toy was new.
- If you believe that you have bought an unsafe item, or if you see unsafe goods on sale, please contact your local Trading Standards Section.

ARE THE GOODS STOLEN?

Stolen goods are known to be disposed of through car boot fairs. Most commonly it will be the proceeds of petty thieving, items stolen from outhouses, garages etc. However, valuable antiques and missing stock deliveries have both been discovered

Check items for markings such as a postcode. If buying from a private individual ask them to repeat any postcode marked. If they can't, proceed with caution

Keep a look out for items where identifying mark (such as the name of the original owner) has been scratched out or obliterated. It may also pay to be wary of power tools etc which come without their original leads.

If you suspect that any goods are stolen, contact your local police station.

ARE THE GOODS COUNTERFEIT?

Clothing, watches, CD's and videos are some of the most common items copied and counterfeited. The temporary nature of car boot sales makes them one of the most common outlets for such items.

Counterfeit goods can be attractively priced. However, they rarely offer value for money. Cheap T-shirts and other clothing will often only last a couple of washes. Poor quality video cassettes can damage recorders. It is illegal to use unauthorised smart cards for satellite TV decoders. If you find counterfeit goods on sale you should alert the local Trading Standards Section. Some counterfeits, for example car parts, can even endanger your life.

Although it is not an offence to purchase counterfeit goods, by so doing you will be helping others to profit by breaking the law. The loss to British businesses as a result of counterfeiting is enormous. Recent estimates suggest that counterfeiters have cost up to 100,000 jobs in Britain. Investigations have produced evidence that drug dealers and other criminals are behind the trade in fake goods.

Further information or assistance may be obtained from the office shown below:

Caerphilly County Borough Council
Directorate of the Environment
Trading Standards Service
Council Offices
Pontllanfraith
Blackwood
NP12 2YW
Tel: 01495 235291
E-mail: tradingstandards@caerphilly.gov.uk