

CONSUMER PROTECTION GUIDE FOR NYC TOURISTS



Whether you've come to NYC to play, stay, shop, or tour, the Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (DCWP) protects you.

If you have a problem with a business, report it right away so we can help while you're here. Be sure to share documentation, including receipts.

Visit nyc.gov/dcwp OR Call **311**

BUSINESSES WE LICENSE

Electronics

- Look for the store's posted refund policy before you pay.
- Examine products closely to make sure they're not used or refurbished and will work where you live.
- Avoid buying extra warranties you may not need.
- Get an itemized receipt and look closely for hidden fees or add-ons.
- Keep boxes and original packaging in case you need to return products.

Hotels

- The rate you pay must match the rate you'd booked. A hotel can't add "destination fees," "resort fees," or other service fees when you check in unless they were included when you booked. This applies to reservations through third-party booking sites.
- Hotels must tell you about service disruptions that will affect your stay and let you cancel without penalty. Service disruptions include strikes, construction, or closed amenities like a pool.
- Hotels must have continuous front desk coverage. Large hotels must also have a security guard.

Pedicabs

- Look for posted rates before you ride. Rate must be per minute using a timer.
- Pedicab drivers can't charge tax, increase the price for additional passengers, or add other fees. They must give you a Pedicab Information Card.

Public Parking Garages and Lots

- Look for the posted rate sign which must be at each entrance.
- If businesses charge different rates for certain days of the week or for special occasions, they must post those rates directly under the regular rate sign or on a separate sign next to the regular rate sign.
- Businesses can't suddenly change rates. They must notify DCWP and post a time-stamped notice for customers for at least 60 days before they change rates.
- Confirm rates before you park, check the time on your claim ticket, and save your receipt.

BUSINESSES WE LICENSE *(continued)*

Sightseeing Guides and Buses

- All guides must wear their DCWP license. This includes guides who offer walking, bus, and boat tours.
- Bus operators must post rates at the entrance of the bus and where you can see them when seated.
- Be sure to get receipts!
 - » Guide receipts must include the guide's or tour organization's name, address, telephone number; DCWP license number; date the ticket was purchased; specific tour purchased; and total price.
 - » Bus receipts must include the fare amount; the description or number of the trip; and the company's DCWP license number.

Ticket Sellers

- All ticket sellers who approach you on the street to buy tickets to events and attractions must wear their DCWP license.
- Ticket sellers may not vend in an aggressive manner or intentionally touch you.
- **Only pay Statue City Cruises to visit the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island.** No one else can legally sell these tickets.
- **The Staten Island Ferry is always free.** Do not buy a ticket for the Staten Island Ferry from a ticket seller.

PREDATORY PRACTICES WE REGULATE

Price Posting

- Businesses must post prices where you order or where products are displayed. If you don't see them, ask to see a price list.
- The price you pay can't be higher than the posted price which should show both the credit card and cash price for items.
- Businesses can't add a credit card surcharge at the register.

Restaurant Surcharges

- The price on the menu should be what's on the bill when you pay.
- Restaurants can charge certain service or required fees only if they are disclosed on the menu or signage.
 - » Acceptable service charges include: charge to share a meal, minimum per person charge.
 - » Acceptable required fee: additional charge for staff due to a labor agreement.

False Advertising

- Ads must describe the name and details of sale items and any restrictions.
- "Bait and switch" ads that promise savings that aren't actually available when you arrive at the store are illegal.

Important Note about Street Performers

Busy tourist areas often have performers wearing costumes or playing music. They may approach you for a tip. Even if you watched their show or took their photograph, you do not have to give them money. If you feel you are being harassed, look for a nearby police officer or call 911.

