



NATIONAL CONSUMER COMMISSION

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MEDIA STATEMENT

28 NOVEMBER 2024

WARNING TO CONSUMERS: UNTRACEABLE AND POTENTIALLY FRAUDULENT SUPPLIERS

The National Consumer Commission (NCC) warns consumers to exercise caution when interacting with certain suppliers during this Black Friday, the festive season and beyond. The NCC identified about 40 suppliers that seem to have either disappeared or cannot be traced at their addresses listed on the sales records or websites provided to consumers. The NCC identified these suppliers through the complaints received from affected consumers, who had either bought products online or instore.

The modus operandi observed is that these suppliers accept the orders, take consumers' money and never deliver the goods or services as expected. These suppliers would thereafter move from the known addresses without providing any forwarding address. The same with online suppliers, these suppliers would also take orders, accept payments and never deliver the products. The suppliers would later abandon the websites or delink the sites completely. The list of these suppliers is available on the NCC's website, and any of the suppliers on the list who have become traceable should contact the NCC to be immediately removed from the list.

The NCC warns consumers to be extra cautious or to avoid doing business with these suppliers as their intention is to defraud consumers. The Consumer Protection Act (CPA) requires suppliers to provide sales records with the correct physical address, contact numbers and websites to ensure that the consumers and authorities where required are able to locate the suppliers.

Suppliers are reminded of their obligation in terms of the CPA. This includes not marketing their offerings in a misleading or deceptive manner. The CPA requires that *"when a retailer or service provider markets the goods, they must do so in a manner that is not misleading or deceiving including the condition of the goods, the price at which the goods may be supplied, or the*

relationship of the price to any previous price or competitor's price for comparable or similar goods."

On the upcoming Black Friday, consumers are further reminded that knowing the original prices of items they intend buying during this period will help to determine if an item is indeed discounted or not. Consumers are urged to be very vigilant when transacting online as some of the online stores are masquerading as legitimate businesses while they are effectively out to scam consumers.

Ends

Issued by: National Consumer Commission (NCC)

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