

COMPLAINTS CONCERNING GOODS

122 Complaint concerning wrong goods

If goods are received which are not of the kind or quality ordered then you are entitled to return them at the supplier's expense.

(a) Complaint

Order number and date — Dear Sirs
On 12 August I ordered 12 copies of Background Music by H Lowery under my order number FT567.

Reasons for dissatisfaction — On opening the parcel received this morning I found that it contained 12 copies of History of Music by the same author. I regret that I cannot keep these books as I have an adequate stock already. I am therefore returning the books by parcel post for immediate replacement, as I have several customers waiting for them.

Action requested — Please credit my account with the invoiced value of the returned copies including reimbursement¹ for the postage cost of £17.90.

Yours faithfully

(b) Reply

Express regret — Dear Mr Ramsay
I was sorry to learn from your letter of 18 August that a mistake was made in dealing with your order.

Explain how the mistake occurred — This mistake is entirely our own and we apologise for the inconvenience it is causing you. This occurred because of staff shortage during this unusually busy season and also the fact that these 2 books by Lowery have identical bindings.

Action taken to rectify the matter — 12 copies of the correct title have been sent to you today.

A closing apology — Your account will be credited with the invoiced value of the books and cost of return postage. Our credit note is enclosed.

Yours sincerely — Our apologies again for this mistake.

¹ reimbursement a refund of money

122 Complaint concerning quality

A buyer is entitled to *reject*² goods that are not of the quality or description ordered. However, later deliveries may also not be accepted, even if the goods are correct.

(a) Complaint

Reasons for complaint — Dear Sirs
We have recently received several complaints from customers about your fountain pens. The pens are clearly not giving satisfaction and in some cases we have had to refund the purchase price.

Further details — The pens are part of the batch of 500 supplied against our order number 8562 dated 28 March. This order was placed on the basis of a sample pen left by your representative. We have ourselves compared the performance of this sample with that of a number of the pens from this batch, and there is little doubt that many of them are faulty – some of them leak and others blot when writing.

Action required — The complaints we have received relate only to pens from the batch mentioned. Pens supplied before these have always been satisfactory.

Close — We therefore wish to return the unsold balance, amounting to 377 pens. Please replace them with pens of the quality which our earlier dealings with you have led us to expect.

Yours faithfully — Please let us know what arrangements you wish us to make for the return of these unsuitable pens.

(b) Reply (accepting complaint)

Dear — Thank you for your letter dated 10 May pointing out faults in the pens supplied to your order number 8562. This has caused us a good deal of concern and we are glad that you brought this matter to our notice.

We have tested a number of pens from the production batch you mention, and agree that they are not perfect. The defects have been traced to a fault in one of the machines, which has now been rectified.

Please arrange to return to us your unsold balance of 377 pens; the cost of postage will be reimbursed in due course. We have already arranged for 400 pens to be sent to replace this unsold balance. The extra 23 pens are sent without charge, and will enable you to provide free replacement of any further pens about which you may receive complaints.

We apologise for the inconvenience this has caused you.

Yours sincerely

² reject refuse

(c) Alternative reply (rejecting complaint)

If circumstances show that a complaint needs to be rejected, you must show an understanding of the customer's position and carefully explain why a rejection is necessary.

Dear

A tactful opening

We are sorry to learn from your letter of 10 May of the difficulties you are having with the pens supplied to your order number 8562.

Explanation of quality control

All our pens are manufactured to be identical in design and performance and we cannot understand why some of them should have given trouble to your customers. It is normal practice for each pen to be individually examined by our Inspection Department before being passed into store. However, from what you say, it would seem that a number of the pens included in the latest batch escaped the usual examination.

Reject the request, but very diplomatically

We sympathise with your problem but regret that we cannot accept your suggestion to take back all the unsold stock from the batch concerned. Indeed there should be no need for this since it is unlikely that the number of faulty pens can be very large. We will gladly replace any pen found to be unsatisfactory, and on this particular batch are prepared to allow you a special discount of 5% to compensate for your inconvenience.

The offer of a discount adds a 'softener'

We trust you will accept this as being a fair and reasonable solution of this matter.

Please give me a call on 4626123 if you have any further questions.

Yours sincerely

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Complaint concerning quantity

(a) Surplus goods delivered

When a supplier delivers more than the quantity ordered, the buyer is legally entitled to reject either all the goods or only the excess quantity. Alternatively all the goods may be accepted and the excess paid for at the same rate. In this letter the buyer rejects the surplus goods but is not obliged to return them; it is the supplier's responsibility to arrange for their collection.

Dear Sirs

Thank you for your promptness in delivering the coffee we ordered on 30 July. However 160 bags were delivered this morning instead of 120 as stated on our order.

Our present needs are completely covered and we cannot make use of the 40 bags sent in excess of our order. These bags will therefore be held in our warehouse until we receive your instructions.

Yours faithfully

(b) Shortage in delivery

When a supplier delivers less than the quantity ordered the customer cannot be compelled to accept delivery by instalments. Immediate delivery of the balance may be requested.

Dear Sir/Madam

OUR ORDER NUMBER 861

We thank you for so promptly delivering the gas coke ordered on 20 March. Although we ordered 5 tonnes in 50-kg bags, only 80 bags were delivered. Your carrier was unable to explain the shortage and we have not received any explanation from you.

We still need the full quantity ordered, so please arrange to deliver the remaining 20 bags as soon as possible.

Yours faithfully

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Complaint to manufacturer

(a) Customer's complaint

In this letter the buyer was advised by the supplier to write directly to the manufacturer regarding faulty goods.

Dear Sirs

On 15 September I bought one of your 'Big Ben' alarm clocks (mains operated) from Stansfield Jewellers in Leeds. Unfortunately I have been unable to get the alarm system to work and am very disappointed with my purchase.

The manager of Stansfield's has advised me to return the clock to you for correction of the fault. This is enclosed.

Please arrange for the clock to be put in full working order and return it to me as soon as possible.

Yours faithfully

(b) Manufacturer's reply

In this reply the manufacturer shows genuine interest in the complaint and does everything possible to ensure customer satisfaction. The considerate manner in which the complaint is treated helps to build a reputation for reliability and fair dealing.

(b) Reply

The supplier's reply promptly complies with the customer's request and shows a desire to improve the service to customers.

Dear

YOUR ORDER NUMBER R569

I was sorry to learn from your letter of 10 January that some of the compact discs supplied to this order were damaged when they reached you.

Replacements for the damaged goods have been sent by parcel post this morning. It will not be necessary for you to return the damaged goods; they may be destroyed.

Despite the care we take in packing goods there have recently been several reports of damage. To avoid further inconvenience and annoyance to customers, as well as expense to ourselves, we are now seeking the advice of a packaging consultant in the hope of improving our methods of handling.

We apologise once again for this, and hope the steps we are taking will ensure the safe arrival of all your orders in future.

Yours sincerely

Acknowledge letter and show regret about damages

Give details about replacements

Give further information about follow-up action

Assurance about future orders

COMPLAINTS CONCERNING DELIVERY

No supplier likes to be accused of negligence or carelessness, which is often what a complaint about packaging amounts to. Such complaints must be carefully worded so as not to give offence. Nothing is to be gained by being sarcastic or insulting – you are much more likely to get what you want by being courteous. Show that you regret having to complain, but explain that the trouble is too serious not to be reported.

Complaint concerning damaged goods

(a) Complaint

The writer of this letter points out damage which was discovered after checking the consignment. Any suggestion that the damage to the goods is due to faulty packing is tactfully avoided.

Dear Sirs

OUR ORDER NUMBER R569

We ordered 160 compact discs on 3 January and they were delivered yesterday. I regret that 18 of them were badly scratched.

The package containing these goods appeared to be in perfect condition and I accepted and signed for it without question.³ It was on unpacking the compact discs the damage was discovered; I can only assume that this was due to careless handling at some stage prior to packing.

I am enclosing a list of the damaged goods and shall be glad if you will replace them. They have been kept aside in case you need them to support a claim on your suppliers for compensation.

Yours faithfully

Introduction and background details

Explain details which evolved after receipt of goods

Enclose full list of damaged goods and request replacement

³ without question without raising any objection