



March, 2023

World Consumer Rights Day: 5 tips for online payments

On 15 March we celebrate World Consumer Rights Day. For the occasion, the European Consumer Centres Network shares five smart tips for the next time you buy online.

1. 'Buy now, Pay Later' is not always a good idea

More and more online shops are offering "buy now, pay later" (BNPL) plans as a payment option. This means you buy and receive what you have ordered first – and pay after. BNPL has some advantages. It allows you to try out a product before you make your decision on if you want to keep it. Do you send back your order? Then you don't have to wait for the refund, as you never made any payment.

However, it's good to be aware of the disadvantages of this payment option, too. 'Buy now, pay later' smoothly merges the payment methods of invoicing and paying in instalments. This means BNPL often takes the form of a loan agreement, which bears risks. If paying later is the only way you can afford a purchase, it may be best to keep your distance and avoid the unintentional accumulation of debt. Also be aware that you may have to pay additional fees if you do not make your payment in time.

2. Don't let dark patterns manipulate you

Dark patterns are marketing tricks designed to manipulate us and persuade us to buy a product. Think of 'limited offers' that only offer you a certain discount if you make the purchase *right now*. Being aware of these marketing tricks can help relieve some of the pressure you may feel. Our advice: take your time and compare prices and products before making a decision.

3. Double-lock your mobile wallet

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a veritable boom in contactless payments. More and more consumers use mobile wallets: smartphone apps that allow us to store bank and credit cards, travel tickets, membership data and more in one digital place. These mobile wallets are generally considered secure. They encrypt your data and cannot be accessed by traders or other people. But as your wallet stores a lot of sensitive data, it is still a good idea to protect it with two-factor authentication or an additional password.

4. Consider using a credit card

Did your order fail to arrive or do you suspect an online shop is a fraud? Contact your credit card provider and ask for a chargeback. Credit card chargeback procedures will often allow you to cancel your payment. Do note: you will need to prove that you have attempted to clarify the situation with the trader first.

5. Set up a price-drop alert

Some shops raise prices ahead of promotion days like Black Friday, only to lower them again and market them as discounts. Are you saving up to buy something? Then watch and compare prices throughout the year or use an online tool that set up a price-alert for a certain product.