



PROGRAM NOTES

SPRING/SUMMER 2008



Published for stores enrolled in the Scanning Certification Program

Wal-Mart Guilty of Overcharging

SCP Vice-Chair Mary Bach has scored another legal victory in the pursuit of retail price accuracy.

The Pittsburgh-area consumer advocate was awarded \$100 plus \$64 in court costs for being repeatedly overcharged at the Wal-Mart in Delmont, PA.

In February, Mary purchased a pair of boys pants for her grandson that were clearly marked on sale for \$3, but rang up at \$5 at the checkout. Mary pointed out the discrepancy to the cashier and front-end manager, who verified the error and then charged Mary the correct price.

The pants were such a big hit that Mary later returned to the store for another pair. She was overcharged \$2 again, told store personnel about the error once more and was then given the pants for the correct price.

Over the course of the next week, Mary and her husband bought two more pairs of pants, each time resulting in the same \$2 overcharge, notification to employees of the problem and refund of the overcharge.

"In the first three instances alone, I had at least eight different Wal-Mart employees involved—cashiers, department managers, front-end managers and customer service associates," Mary noted. "It comes down to the responsibility of the retailer to charge the correct advertised price, especially when an error is repeatedly brought to their attention."

(see *Pants* on page 7...)

Avoid Price Accuracy Policy Gaffes; Bolster Customer Satisfaction

Stores that participate in the Scanning Certification Program (SCP) are required to adopt a price accuracy policy, which gives customers a free item of up to \$10 in value if they are overcharged on that item.

It sounds simple enough, but too often the refund process doesn't go smoothly or may not even happen at all.

"Fortunately we don't receive a lot of complaints on the SCP hotline, but virtually all of the calls we do get are from customers who were overcharged, but didn't get the item for free," observes SCP Executive Director Autumn Thomas. "Most shoppers accept that price errors will occur from time

to time, but they're understandably much less forgiving if a store doesn't follow its own posted policy."

How can a store ensure its employees are executing the Price Accuracy Policy properly? By providing cashiers, customer service associates, managers and any other employees who interact with shoppers, training on the purpose of the policy, the specifics of how to implement it and what the exclusions are. Even veteran staffers benefit from periodic reminders about what to do when price errors occur.

Detailed Price Accuracy Policy "do's and don't's" and training guidelines are found in the *Scanning Certification Program Operations Manual*, which

every store receives when it joins the program. All appropriate personnel need to review the manual and partake in training that:

- *Explains why the policy exists*

Compliance with any policy is better when employees understand the reasons for having it. Employees need to know that some consumers remain skeptical about the accuracy of check-

Too often the refund process doesn't go smoothly or may not even happen at all.

out scanners and worry that the technology enables stores to reap benefits from overcharges in a manner not possible with manually-entered prices. The Price Accuracy Policy helps to alleviate these concerns by letting customers know stores care about charging the correct

price and are willing to "go the extra mile" to correct any overcharge errors that occur.

Sometimes employees don't give customers a Price Accuracy Policy refund because they think they are saving their store money by not giving an item for free. Make sure associates know that a refund is to be proactively offered anytime an applicable overcharge occurs, not just when a customer insists on receiving the item for free.

- *Discusses appropriate attitude*

One recent complaint logged by SCP involved a customer who was overcharged 20 cents on a \$3.99 item. The

(see *Price Accuracy Policy* on page 7...)

Thank You to SCP Participants!

Over 1,350 stores are currently enrolled in the Scanning Certification Program. Kudos to these stores for making price accuracy a top priority! The most recent members of our 100% Club are displayed in bold.

Acme Market #7703
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Acme Market #7998
Altoona Sav-A-Lot
Baldwin Shop 'n Save
Bethel Park Foodland
Bethel Park Shop 'n Save
Beulah Road Foodland
Bill's ShopRite - Moscow
Bill's ShopRite - Mt. Pocono
Canonsburg Shop 'n Save
Castle Shannon Shop 'n Save
Crafton Sav-A-Lot
Cresson Shop 'n Save
Cropper's Market
Duquesne Sav-A-Lot
East Pittsburgh Street Shop 'n Save
East Rochester Shop 'n Save
Ferguson & Hassler
Fifth Avenue Foodland
foodsource #483
Gerrity's Supermarket #63262
Gerrity's Supermarket #63263
Gerrity's Supermarket #63275
Gerrity's Supermarket #63276
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Gerrity's Supermarket #63287
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Giant Eagle #0002
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Giant Eagle #5811

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 Glassport Foodland
 Glenshaw Shop 'n Save
 Gristick's FoodKart
 Grove City County Market
 Heidelberg Shop 'n Save
 Henderson Avenue Foodland
 Holiday Park Shop 'n Save
 Homestead Shop 'n Save
 Hopewell Shop 'n Save
 Imperial Shop 'n Save
 Jane's Market - Biglerville
 Jane's Market - Mercersburg
 Kennedy Township Shop 'n Save
 Kennie's Market - Gettysburg
 Kennie's Market - Littlestown
 Kennie's Market - Spring Grove
 King's Super Market #181
 King's Super Market #182
 King's Super Market #184
 King's Super Market #185
 King's Super Market #186
 Kittanning Foodland
 Latrobe Shop 'n Save
 Lebanon Shops Foodland
 Leechburg Sav-A-Lot
 Lower Burrell Sav-a-Lot
 Martin's Food Market #012
 Martin's Food Market #032
 Martin's Food Market #288
 Martin's Food Market #290
 Martin's Food Market #292
 Martin's Food Market #308
 Martin's Food Market #325

McKeesport Sav-A-Lot
 Meyersdale Shop 'n Save
 Midway Supermarket
 Monessen Foodland
 Monongahela Foodland
 Mt. Pleasant Shop 'n Save
 Mt. Washington Foodland
 Murrysville Shursave
 Mutzabaugh's Market
 Natrona Heights Sav-a-Lot
 Nells Shurfine Market #1600
 Nells Shurfine Market #1607
 Nells Shurfine Market #1608
 Nells Shurfine Market #1971
 Nells Shurfine Market #1972
 Nells Shurfine Market #1973
 Nells Shurfine Market #4852
 New Castle Shop 'n Save
 Olympia Shop 'n Save
 Oregon Dairy Farm Market
 Penn Hills Shop 'n Save
 Perryopolis Sav-A-Lot
 Price Chopper #059
 Price Chopper #110
 Price Chopper #135
 Price Chopper #169
 Price Chopper #173
 Price Chopper #190
 Richboro Shop 'n Bag
 Rochester Road Shop 'n Save
 Rostraver Shop 'n Save
 Route 8 Shop 'n Save
 Route 30 Shop 'n Save
 Route 66 Shop 'n Save
 Saltsburg Shop 'n Save
 Saylor's Market
 Shaler Shop 'n Save
 ShopRite of Knorr
 South Fayette Shop 'n Save
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Tops Market #601
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Village Foodland Fresh
Warehouse Groceries
Washington Shop ' n Save
Wawa #0001
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SCP Participants (...continued from page 7)

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Price Accuracy Policy (...continued from front page)

courtesy booth clerk offered the customer a 20-cent refund, and when the customer asked why she didn't get the item for free, the clerk replied, "you're getting the 20 cents back, isn't that enough." Other shoppers have said they felt clerks passed judgment on them or made them feel like they were asking for something they didn't deserve.

To ensure customer satisfaction, employees need to execute the Price Accuracy Policy correctly and treat customers in a professional and courteous manner. Especially when dealing with the dreaded difficult customers—who are themselves rude, demanding and/or defensive.

• Debunks myths

One of the main challenges to handling price accuracy refunds properly is the various misperceptions employees have about the policy. Here are the common "untruths":

- the Price Accuracy Policy only applies to scanned items (overcharges on PLU items or products that are key-entered by the cashier are also included);
- the Price Accuracy Policy only applies if a customer has paid for their purchases (the policy is in effect during checkout too, as long as the order is totaled so that any discounts can be calculated);
- the Price Accuracy Policy only applies if a customer has not left the store (it doesn't matter whether the customer finds an error before or after leaving the store, as long as they report the discrepancy within 72 hours and have a receipt for the item);
- the Price Accuracy Policy doesn't apply when the overcharge is due to the presence of an expired shelf tag, sign or item price (it's the store's responsibility to remove expired price labels in a timely manner).

Training should also include a discussion of what exactly a

free item is. That may be obvious—when a customer is overcharged on a frozen pizza, they get one of those pizzas for free. For any prepackaged product, a loaf of bread or a mop, what's free is one unit of that item. But how about when a shopper is

overcharged on three pounds of pears that are sold by the pound? They get one pound for free and the remaining two pounds at the correct price. Same holds true for any per pound item where the customer selects the quantity, such as deli meats and shrimp.

While the Price Accuracy Policy applies to most everything in the store, there are a few exclusions to be aware of. In Pennsylvania, milk and tobacco prices are regulated by the government and retailers cannot give these items away for free. Ohio and West

Virginia have similar laws for alcohol and tobacco. In Maryland, tobacco is the only item that doesn't qualify for a price accuracy refund. If an overcharge occurs on a restricted item, employees can only give the customer that item for the correct price.

Finally, some SCP retailers have price accuracy policies that are more generous than program standards, for example not having a \$10 limit on the free item. Training needs to specify what added benefits are available to customers.

PRICE ACCURACY POLICY


If the charged* price of a product is higher than any shelf or advertised price, the customer will receive one of that item free up to a limit of \$10. For an item costing more than \$10, the customer will receive \$10 off the lowest shelf or advertised price.**

The customer will be charged the lower price for any additional items of that product in the order.

**Charged price includes prices for items scanned, price look-up items, or items for which the price is entered manually.*

***Shelf Price includes any displayed or posted price. Void when prohibited by federal, state or local law.*

**PRICE QUESTIONS/COMMENTS?
CALL 1-888-SCAN-SCP (1-888-722-6727)**



Pants (...continued from front page)

When Mary bought a fifth pair of pants and was overcharged again, she didn't point out the error, she sued. "If they had corrected the error as they kept promising to, it would have never have happened over and over," she said. "Wal-Mart had a duty to take care of it."

The judge agreed, ruling in Mary's favor. Wal-Mart was represented in court by an assistant manager from the Delmont store who admitted that the store was wrong.

Weights and Measures Chief Retires

SCP board member Ken Deitzler has retired from his post as Chief of the Weights and Measures division of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Ride and Measurement Standards.

Ken held that position from 2001 until the end of last year and had previously served a two-year stint as a state regional supervisor for weights and measures.

Prior to joining the Department of Agriculture, Ken had a lengthy career in the Army. He held the rank of Sergeant Major when he retired from the military in 1999 after 32 years of service.

At the time of his retirement, Ken also announced his resignation from the Scanning Certification Program Board of Advisors. Ken said he's looking forward to spending more time with his family and pursuing various outdoors hobbies.

"We wish Ken all the best," said SCP's Autumn Thomas, "he's been a key member of our board and provided a crucial link between our activities and the state's price verification program."

In January, the Department of Agriculture announced that Mike Rader was appointed to fill the Chief of Weights and Measures position. Mike previously worked as a state weights and measures inspector and has an educational background in electrical engineering.

According to Bureau Director John Dillabaugh, Mike has been assigned the task of updating and revising the state's price verification program to increase uniformity and accountability.

"We look forward to working with Mike and having him as a member of the Board of Advisors," stated Autumn.

PROGRAM NOTES

SPRING/SUMMER 2008



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- Subscription is included in the cost of program enrollment.
- If you have any questions or comments, please contact:

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