OREGON DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
Consumer Outreach & Education | Consumer Advocacy

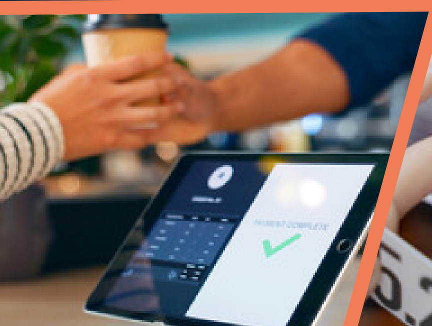
2026 EDITION

FOOD and BEVERAGE, MISLEADING & UNLAWFUL BUSINESS PRACTICES

A GUIDE FOR OREGON CONSUMERS, WORKING FAMILIES, AND OLDER ADULTS

Food and beverages are something we purchase every day. From groceries to restaurant meals, from food delivery services to supplements sold online. Most businesses provide goods and services honestly, but consumers can still encounter misleading prices, unexpected charges , unclear terms, aggressive sales tactics or other unethical business practices.

This guide offers information and **hyperlinked resources** to help Oregon consumers and working families recognize unethical business practices, ask questions, make informed decisions and know where to get support if something does not seem right.



WHAT'S INSIDE

WHY THIS MATTERS

In 2025, the Oregon Consumer Advocacy Program received numerous complaints about misleading prices of food and beverage products, placing these issues among the top ten complaints for the year.

COMMON CONCERNS INCLUDE:

- ✓ False or misleading advertising
- ✓ Posted prices changing at checkout
- ✓ Automatic subscriptions, delivery services and unexpected charges
- ✓ Misleading product claims

1 PART 1: WHAT TO KNOW

Food and beverage, misleading & unethical business practices

Whether you are buying groceries, meal programs, eating at a restaurant, ordering delivery, making online purchases, buying a supplement, or signing up for a recurring service, it helps to know what you are agreeing to and what you are paying for.

What to Know and Understand

READ THE TERMS, BEFORE YOU BUY

Know what you are agreeing to. Check menu prices, promotions, cancellations and refund policies, automatic renewals, recurring deliveries, service terms and other conditions. This includes delivery services and subscription products such as vitamins and supplements.

KNOW THE TOTAL PRICE BEFORE YOU PAY

Check the price and look for added costs. Look for posted prices, required fees, delivery or service charges, taxes, automatic gratuities, subscriptions or recurring charges. **Make sure the total matches what was disclosed.**

ADVERTISING SHOULD NOT MISLEAD YOU

Make sure the offer matches what you receive. Be cautious of advertisements, promotions, or product claims that leave out important details, promise results that seem too good to be true, or differ from what is offered at checkout. **Save screenshots, receipts, or order confirmations.**

Common places consumers encounter problems

- Fast food & sit down restaurants
- Food trucks
- Delivery food services
- Grocery stores & markets
- Delivery & subscription services
- Supplements & Vitamins

Consumer Tip: A good consumer habit is to **slow down, check the details, and keep records.**

2 PART 2: WHAT TO WATCH FOR

Warning Signs & Unethical business practices

Not every disappointing purchase is unethical. Still, when purchasing food and beverage products, especially meal programs or free trial offers, certain warning signs can signal a lack of transparency. Watching these signs can help you avoid surprise charges or misleading offers. If something feels off, take a closer look.

- **Poor Food Safety**
- **Delivery issues**
- **Payment Problems** — Refusal to accept cash, cards only or extra fees
- **Gift card or subscription problems**
- **Subscription or "free trial" traps that require a credit card**
- **Missing or Hard-to-Find Fine Print**
- **Pressure to buy now or upgrade**
- **Misleading prices, price gouging, or Bait-and switch**
- **False, exaggerated claims or too good to be true** — Health, organic or quality claims that are not true or proven

REMEMBER: The price you expect and the amount you are charged should match what was clearly disclosed.

3 PART 3: BEFORE, DURING & AFTER

PROTECTING YOURSELF, YOUR FAMILY AND YOUR COMMUNITY

A few simple steps can help prevent problems and make it easier to resolve them if something goes wrong. Focus on understanding what you are buying, paying for and what you can do if the purchase or service does not go as expected.

BEFORE YOU BUY:

- [ ] Check reviews from multiple sources.
- [ ] Look for additional fees.
- [ ] Review subscription or automatic renewal terms.
- [ ] Check cancellation terms and refund policies.
- [ ] Research the business and any consumer complaints.
- [ ] Save ads or online offers
- [ ] Review product claims carefully.

DURING THE PURCHASE:

- [ ] Confirm the total before paying.
- [ ] Ask about fees you do not understand.
- [ ] Get important promises in writing.
- [ ] Review the receipt before leaving.
- [ ] Keep your confirmation and order number.
- [ ] If the price changes unexpectedly, ask why.

AFTER THE PURCHASE:

- [ ] Review your bank and card statements.
- [ ] Confirm recurring charges are what you expected.
- [ ] Save receipts and communications.
- [ ] Contact the business promptly about a problem.
- [ ] Document who you spoke with and when.
- [ ] Report concerns if the problem is not resolved.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

Is the price clear and final?

Who can I contact if there is a problem?

What am I really agreeing to?

Will I be charged automatically and when?

PAUSE → CHECK → ASK → DOCUMENT

4 PART 4: WHERE TO GET HELP

Reporting Problems

If you believe a business has misled you, charged you unexpectedly or engaged in an unethical business practice you have options. Start by reviewing the details, contacting the business, documenting what happened, checking the business policies and using the guide below to help determine where to report a concern.

Oregon Department of Justice
oregonconsumer.gov

Oregon Dept. of Agriculture (ODA)
oregon.gov/oda

Oregon Health Authority (OHA)
oregon.gov/oha

Oregon State Bar - Lawyer Referral Services
osbar.org/public/ris

Federal Trade Commission (FTC)
ftc.gov

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB)
consumerfinance.gov

Better Business Bureau
bbb.org

BEFORE YOU REPORT GATHER:

- [ ] Receipts or payment information
- [ ] Ads or offers details
- [ ] Menu or posted price
- [ ] Order confirmation
- [ ] Names of business or people you contacted
- [ ] Screenshots

Check information | **Document everything** | **Report issues**

File a complaint or search Oregon's complaint database: oregonconsumer.gov