



## Trading Standards' message-laden "Xmas trees" to help shoppers

**A few tips to follow when buying presents to avoid problems later.**



**X** is for **eXamine**: always carefully check goods in the shop for damage, tears or marks, particularly if the item is in a sale.

**M** is for **Measure up**: Don't be afraid to ask the intended recipient of a clothing gift for their sizes before buying to avoid problems later. Alternatively, ask for a gift receipt which doesn't give away how much the present cost and enclose it with the present.

**A** is for **Avoid**: Many complaints made to Trading Standards concern items which turn out to be faulty or unsuitable that were bought from temporary outlets, street sellers and car boot sales. Shoppers should be wary about buying from a trader who might be difficult to find after Christmas if problems arise.

**S** is for **Safety**: If you are buying a toy for a child, make sure it is suitable for their age range and meets all relevant safety standards. Particularly look out for a CE mark.

**T** is for **Trading Standards**: If you have a complaint which the seller is unable to resolve to your satisfaction, contact Consumer Direct 08454 04 05 06 or if you suspect an item is a fake, or you are concerned about a product's safety, contact the Isle of Wight Council Trading Standards Service on 823370.

**R** is for **Refund**: Ask the shop if they would be willing to refund the purchase if the gift is unwanted or unsuitable. Don't simply ask if you can bring it back as this often causes misunderstanding - ask for it in writing on the back of the receipt. Remember, you have no right to a refund unless the item is faulty or does not match the description on the box or label - and by law the person who bought the goods has to take them back (although most major stores adopt a more flexible approach at Christmas time.)

**E** is for **Exchange**: Many shops are willing to exchange goods if they are unsuitable. Again, ask for confirmation of this in writing when you buy the item. Remember it is not your legal right if there is nothing wrong with them.

**E** is for **Electrical**: Take particular care when buying electrical goods that they meet safety standards and, as soon as possible after purchase, check the item works properly.

**S** is for **Scams**: Be aware that a card posted through your door suggesting that a company was unable to deliver a parcel and you need to contact them by phone can result in you being billed in excess of £315. This is one of many scams that you may find around Christmas.