

One last detail: If a consumer commodity costing more than \$20 scans incorrectly -- for example, a carton of bathroom tissue -- the law still applies. Rather than a free item, the shopper is entitled to an immediate \$20 credit off the total purchase at the cash register.

### Next steps

If you're at the register and you see an item scan at a higher price than what's posted or marked, point it out to the cashier as soon as you notice it, and ask for that item to be provided free of charge. If necessary, speak to the store manager or the service desk.

If the issue is not corrected by the store, please contact the Department of Consumer Protection at (860) 713-6160 or toll-free at 1-800-842-2649 for additional assistance.

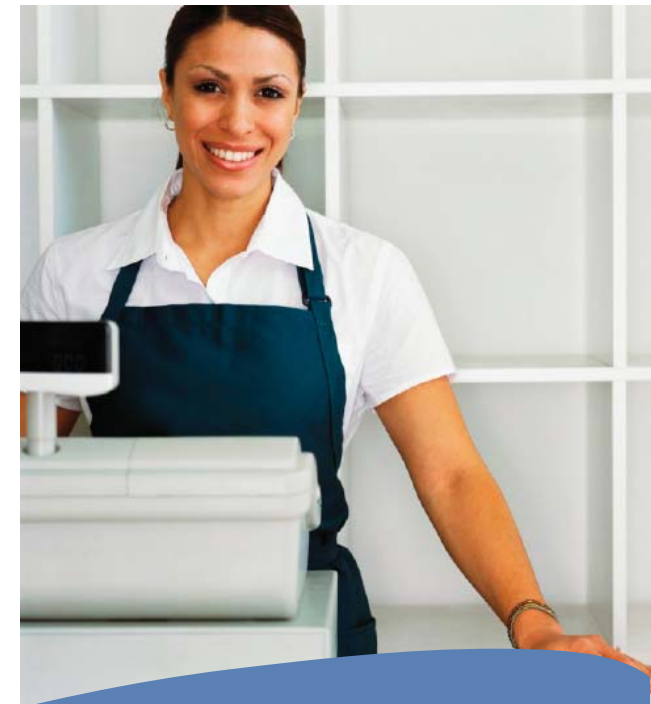
Stores that use price scanning must be approved by, and registered with, the Department of Consumer Protection. Once a store is approved and registered, it is responsible for maintaining the accuracy of its own scanning system. However, the Department routinely inspects and tests store scanners in Connecticut, and will respond to any consumer's concerns about inaccurate price scanning.



State of Connecticut  
Department of Consumer Protection  
165 Capitol Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06106

Toll-free: 1-800-842-2649  
Questions: 860-713-6160  
email: [food.standards@ct.gov](mailto:food.standards@ct.gov)

## Price Scanning and the "Get One Free" Law



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

Department of Consumer Protection

Most stores now use electronic scanners at their checkout counters to “read” the bar codes on each item.

Scanning enables the cashier to total purchases more quickly, and helps the store to keep track of the items and quantities that are being sold.

However, shoppers often ask whether the scanned prices are accurate, particularly on weekly sale items.

Connecticut law offers relief to consumers who believe they were incorrectly charged for items they have purchased.

## What Happens if the Scanned Price isn't Accurate?

Shoppers rightly wonder whether the prices scanned at the register are the same, higher, or lower than the prices advertised in the store's circular, on the items themselves, or on signs posted throughout the store.

The law allows stores to price their merchandise individually with labels, or to use Universal Product Coding (UPC) to scan item prices and tally customers' purchases at the register. Today, most stores choose to scan.

The technology that stores use to change and match their scanned prices to their advertised prices has improved over time, but occasional mistakes and oversights do occur. It's important for you to know your consumer rights in the event of inaccurate price scanning.

## The “Get One Free” Law

The “Get One Free law” protects consumers in Connecticut from paying for items that ring up higher at the checkout than they're supposed to.

If an item scans higher at checkout than the sticker price on the item itself or the price posted on the shelf, the shopper is entitled to that item at no cost.

State law requires the retailer to give the item free, up to a value of \$20. The shopper has to point out the error and ask for the free item.

If the product scans lower than the posted price, the shopper doesn't get the item free, but is allowed to buy one of the item at the lower, scanned price.

This law applies only to “consumer commodities” -- things that get “used up” or depleted over time and must be regularly replaced.

For example, a loaf of bread and a box of band-aids are consumer commodities; when the bag or box is empty, we buy more. A toothbrush, a broom and a sponge are not commodities; they may wear out, but they don't get “used up” and replenished in the same way.