



Highlights: Buying Appliances

Unlike with most other big-ticket transactions, a lot can go wrong with appliance purchases. **Washington Consumers' CHECKBOOK** magazine and www.checkbook.org have ratings of 68 local appliance retailers and advice to help consumers get the appliances they want for the lowest price, without headaches. Some of the findings included in CHECKBOOK's report on buying appliances:

- CHECKBOOK's researchers found substantial differences in price among local retailers for the same appliances. For example, for a GE refrigerator (model GFSS6KKYSS) in stainless steel, prices ranged from \$1,825 to \$2,387, a difference of \$562. For a Samsung gas range (model FX710BGS) in stainless steel, prices ranged from \$1,390 to \$1,758, a difference of \$368.
- CHECKBOOK found significant differences in the quality of service provided by local appliance retailers. Some stores received "superior" ratings for overall quality by 85 percent or more of their surveyed customers; others received such favorable ratings from 40 percent or fewer.
- Consumers don't have to pay more to get good service. *High-rated stores were just as likely to quote low prices as their low-rated competitors.*

CHECKBOOK's Advice for Appliance Shopping Success

- Choose a retailer carefully, especially if you need help deciding which appliance to purchase. Many local stores, particularly the big chains, were rated quite low for the advice provided by their salespeople. And according to the ratings CHECKBOOK gets from local consumers, the problems persist, with frequent delivery delays and improper and sloppy installation work.
- Shop around. It is easy to obtain price quotes from salespeople at appliance stores. To get the best prices you should call or email and make it clear you're seeking competitive quotes from several stores. *Don't* assume sale prices are good prices.
- When comparing prices, take into account fees for delivery, hauling away old appliances, and installation.
- Don't assume you'll get low prices by buying from the big chains or even online: CHECKBOOK often found lower prices elsewhere.
- Get all terms of a sale in writing, including the salesperson's contact information, appliance brand and model number, prices for the appliances and all delivery and installation charges, and a delivery date commitment.
- Pay by credit card. If you have a problem, you can protest the charge with your card issuer.
- Skip the extended warranties pushed by most stores. These offers are great deals for the stores that sell them, but awful deals for customers, costing much more than they ever pay out in claims.
- If you know your install will be complicated or unusual, hire a top-rated plumber for the job.

The media may cite selected examples of top-rated appliance stores, as shown in *Washington Consumers' CHECKBOOK*, and CHECKBOOK's editors are available for interviews. Please call Jamie Lettis at 202-454-3006 to schedule.

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