



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

September 2, 2011  
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## **BACK-TO-SCHOOL SPECIALS MAY NOT BE SO SPECIAL** *County Warns Consumers to Check Their Receipts and Report Pricing Errors*

It's that time of year again when moms, dads and school kids are looking to stock up on school and office supplies at a bargain price. Shoppers should be alert when paying for these bargains to make sure they are actually getting the lowest advertised prices.

From July 2010 to June 2011, inspectors from the County's Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures (AMW) scanned more than 26,000 items at 1,600 retail stores and found 25 percent of the stores had pricing errors. Inspections showed that overcharges varied with the type of store. While the average overcharge at grocery or convenience stores was 45 cents, it was \$3.00 at other retail stores. The overcharges tended to be the same percentage of sales at all stores. Consumers need to be vigilant when buying items at any store, especially higher priced items, to make sure they are not overcharged.

"In these challenging economic times, people need to be sure they are paying the lowest posted or advertised price," said County Supervisor Dianne Jacob. "Back-to-school time is the second busiest shopping season and shoppers must take time to check their receipts."

Since inspectors can't be in all stores every day, the County inspection program enlists the help of consumers. If there is a discrepancy in the advertised price and the price scanned at the register, shoppers should notify store management before they leave the store or report the violations to the County.

The County's Consumer Confidence Protection Act of 1999 requires a notice to be posted at each check-out stand notifying consumers of their rights. San Diego County was one of the first to adopt such an ordinance. Now, 20 California counties have similar programs.

### **Tips for Shoppers:**

- The check-out display must clearly show customers what prices are being charged as items are scanned.
- Verify receipts before leaving the store and notify management of any discrepancies.
- Call **1-888-TRUE SCAN (1-888-878-3722)** to report overcharges you could not resolve with the store.
- Visit [www.sdcawm.org](http://www.sdcawm.org) for more information.

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