

Connecticut's "Get One Free" Law

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Issue

This report describes Connecticut's "Get One Free" law and updates OLR Report [2016-R-0270](#).

"Get One Free" Law

By law, consumers at certain stores must be given a consumer commodity for free if it costs less than \$20 and its (1) price at the point of sale is higher than the posted or advertised price or (2) electronically scanned price is higher than the posted price. The consumer must point out the error and ask for the free item ([CGS §§ 21a-79\(b\)\(7\) & -79b](#) as amended by [PA 22-104](#), §§ 34 & 35).

Consistent with agency practice, [PA 22-104](#), §§ 34 & 35, also specifies that when a retailer fails to redeem a digital or paper coupon or remove a limited time reduced price sign, the retailer must give the consumer the item (including fruits or vegetables weighed at point of sale) at the reduced price rather than for free. If the retailer fails to redeem a coupon, it must give the consumer a refund equal to the coupon's value. And if it fails to remove a limited time reduced price sign, it must give the reduced price to consumers if the sign is next to the consumer commodity, even if the time period for the reduced price has expired.

Consumer Commodity

A consumer commodity is any food, drug, device, cosmetic, product, or commodity of any other class, except prescription drugs, that is customarily produced for retail sale for individual consumption, personal care, or household purposes and is usually consumed or expended during consumption or use. It does not include alcoholic liquor or carbonated soft drink containers ([CGS §§ 21a-73 & -79b](#), as amended by [PA 22-104](#), § 35).

Additionally, if a product scans at a price lower than the posted price, the consumer may buy one of the items at the lower, scanned price ([Conn. Agencies Regs., § 21a-79-3](#)).

The “Get One Free” law only applies to stores with retail sales areas of more than 10,000 square feet. These stores must post a conspicuous sign to inform consumers of this right.

After providing notice and conducting a hearing, the consumer protection commissioner may issue violators a warning citation or impose a civil penalty of up to \$100 for a first offense and up to \$500 for each subsequent offense. If the violation was a scanning error, the retailer could be subject to another fine of up to \$200 for a first offense and up to \$1,000 for subsequent offenses. Each violation with respect to all units of a particular commodity on a single day is deemed a single offense ([CGS § 21a-79b](#)).

For more information on price scanning and the “Get One Free” law, see the Department of Consumer Protection’s [website](#).

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