



**Better Business Bureau<sup>®</sup>  
of Central and Northern Alberta**

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## Media Release

### February Top 10 Complaints & Inquiries

**Edmonton, AB** (March 1, 2007) During the month of February 2007, the Better Business Bureau<sup>®</sup> of Central and Northern Alberta received the following complaints and inquiries about businesses in the following industries: (Ranked from highest to the lowest)

|    | Complaints                            |    | Inquiries                     |
|----|---------------------------------------|----|-------------------------------|
| 1  | Furniture-Retail                      | 1  | Home Builders                 |
| 2  | Auto Dealers-New Cars                 | 2  | Movers                        |
| 3  | Computers Software & Services         | 3  | Auto Dealers-New Cars         |
| 4  | Fuel Marketers                        | 4  | Internet Marketing Services   |
| 5  | Movers                                | 5  | Work-At-Home Companies        |
| 6  | Auto Repair & Service                 | 6  | Home Improvements             |
| 7  | Telephone Communications              | 7  | Multi-Level Selling Companies |
| 8  | Home Improvements                     | 8  | Computers Software & Services |
| 9  | Computers-Dealers                     | 9  | Auto Repair & Service         |
| 10 | Telephone Equipment & Systems Dealers | 10 | Plumbing Contractors          |

### Backgrounder

The following is a Consumer Tip from the Better Business Bureau of Central and Northern Alberta that provides background information about complaints that we received. For further tips, visit [www.edmontonbbb.org/BBBtips.html](http://www.edmontonbbb.org/BBBtips.html)

#### Buying Furniture

Household furniture is sold in two categories:

- upholstered (sofa, easy chairs, etc.) and
- wooden or metal furniture (often referred to as case goods).

#### Upholstered Furniture

Traditionally, the best frames have been made of kiln-dried hardwood which resists warping. Today, quality frames may also be made of steel, plastic, laminated boards or a combination of materials.

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A spring edge consists of a heavy-gauge wire connected to the front row of coil springs or front ends of sinuous springs that gives the upholstered piece a better ride. A hard edge is lumber padded and upholstered to soften it.

Legs on upholstered furniture can be either built-in (part of the front and side rail to make them an integral part of the frame) or screw-in (for removal in a tight spot). Some longer pieces (i.e. sofas) have additional center supports.

The design, size and amount of support or softness desired by the designer will determine which type of spring construction is used. Examples are:

- 8-way tied  
Spiral – shaped coil springs are cinched to the frame then hand knotted in 8 different places along the coil with heavy twine. This provides the firmest seat because the weight of the setter is more uniformly distributed. The quality depends on the number of coils in a seat, the gauge of wire and the number and type of knots.
- No-sag or sinuous  
Less costly and usually found in moderately priced upholstery. An S-shaped wire fastened from the front to the back. Gives a softer seat and requires less room between the bottom of the sofa and the deck. The quality of this construction depends upon the gauge of wire and number of wires used.
- Woven webbing seating suspension  
European technology is used to create a durable and resilient seating construction using industrial strength polyester/nylon woven webbing. Wide straps are permanently attached to the frame in either a straight or basket-weave configuration and straps are set to specific, unified tension gauged by a computer for consistency of seating throughout. This suspension provides a flexible yet sturdy foundation that lasts indefinitely while allowing for more freedom in terms of design, shape and comfort. This is the same seating suspension that many automotive and aeronautic manufacturers use, knowing that it can withstand heavy weight and stress.

Fabrics are a major cost factor for the manufacturer. Choose your fabric based on the usage and expected durability of the piece. The furniture salesperson should be aware of the benefits of the various choices (synthetic, nylon, cotton, etc.). Fabrics are either exclusively woven, for a particular furniture manufacturer, or made available on the market for various manufacturers to use. The open availability allows some manufacturers to “knock-off” in appearance another’s more quality piece using the same or similar design and fabric, with a lesser quality frame, spring, cushions, etc.

Most quality manufacturer’s stores can custom order, to meet your individual needs for fabrics. This will, of course, increase the cost and delivery time. The store should give you a written estimate of these details, before you make your purchase.

Very firm foam in cushions may be a sign of poor quality that may not last very long. Another sign of poor quality foam is if the individual seat cushions on a sofa or loveseat buckle and form a gap in between them.

The following is a checklist for buying upholstered furniture:

- Seats are comfortable
- Backs are free of bumps and hard spots
- Frame is sturdy, doesn't creak or wobble
- Frame sits squarely on the floor
- Frame and corners are well padded
- Corners are braced and glued
- Seams and welts are straight
- Patterns and stripes match at seams
- Patterns are centered
- Cushions fit snugly
- Cushions are resilient
- Buttons are sewn on securely
- Heavy-duty pieces are covered in tightly woven, durable fabric
- Mechanisms on recliners and sleep sofas work smoothly
- Any moving parts clear fabric to prevent tearing
- Metal parts are smooth with no sharp edges
- Dual purpose seating is well balanced in each position

## Wooden Furniture

When you hear salespeople refer to “case goods,” they’re talking about chests, dressers, tables – living room and dining room pieces.

“Case goods” is an industry term that refers to furniture that’s generally constructed of wood. In actuality, today’s case goods may be made totally or in part of metal, plastics or other man-made materials. Materials are, of course, a determining factor in the look of a piece and will affect durability and price.

Two other types of wooden furniture are knock down, which requires assembly (bookshelves, computer desks, entertainment units, etc.) and unfinished furniture that is plain and can be finished by the consumer.

As with upholstered furniture, be careful of “knock-off” models of another more quality manufacture’s using lesser quality materials and construction.

The following is a checklist for buying wooden furniture:

- Doors and drawers fit well.
- Drawers have glides and stops.
- Drawers glide easily when pulled.
- Drawers have dust panels.
- Drawer corners are jointed securely.
- Insides of drawers are smooth and snag free.
- Long shelves have center supports.
- Doors swing open easily without squeaking or rubbing.
- Hardware is secure and strong.
- No rough edges on hardware.

Long doors are attached with study hinges.  
Interior lights operate easily and replacement bulbs are easily purchased.  
Entertainment units have hole for electrical cords.  
Heavy balanced feeling when table is rocked.  
Tables leaves fit properly.  
Tables leaves match grain and finish of table.  
Finish feels smooth to the touch.(except distressed)  
Distressed finish has randomly spaced dark marks.

As always, ensure that you contact the [Better Business Bureau](#) for a reliability report on the retailer that you choose to purchase furniture from.

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