

Target to pay \$1.7 million in consumer protection lawsuit for overcharges

Contributed by Editor
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SONOMA COUNTY – Target Corp. has reached a settlement with a number of counties due to a case that alleged the chain store was overcharging customers.

On Tuesday Sonoma County District Attorney Stephan R. Passalacqua announced that his office and the district attorneys of Contra Costa, Fresno, Marin, and Santa Cruz counties reached a settlement in a civil law enforcement action filed against Target Corp., the operator of Target stores throughout California.

The complaint alleged that Target violated the law by charging customers more than the lowest posted price for items.

Under the terms of the settlement, Target agreed, without admitting wrongdoing, to pay \$1,745,522 in civil penalties, costs and restitution, and to injunctive provisions to ensure future compliance.

The judgment requires Target to implement additional audit and price accuracy procedures in its California stores for a four year period to ensure compliance with pricing accuracy requirements.

“Consumers should not have to worry about being charged the correct price when items are scanned at store registers,” said Passalacqua. “We believe the settlement in this case sends a message that will help ensure that consumer expectations are met.”

The civil complaint and stipulated final judgment were filed in Contra Costa County Superior Court on Oct. 20.

The case arose from regular price scanner inspections by the Departments of Weights and Measures in the counties of Sonoma, Contra Costa, Marin, Fresno and Santa Cruz, which coordinated their investigation with departments in other counties.

These local agencies, and the State Division of Measurement Standards, are instrumental in monitoring stores to make sure that consumers are charged accurately.

Scanner inspections at the Target stores disclosed numerous occasions where the price charged at the cash register was not the lowest posted price. Target cooperated with inspectors and the district attorneys' offices during the investigation, and has since instituted new policies and procedures to improve pricing accuracy.

Passalacqua acknowledged the hard work of Weights and Measures officials throughout the state for their vigilant enforcement efforts in the case. Deputy District Attorney Matt Cheever handled the matter for this office.

Sonoma County consumers may call the Sonoma County Department of Weights and Measures at 707-565-2371 if they have a complaint or questions about pricing issues.

Consumers are reminded that the best way to ensure they are charged the correct price is to verify themselves the price at the time the items are scanned and they receive their receipt.

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