

BRIEFCASE

Selling Used Goods: Risk Management

Many charities collect second-hand items for resale and use charity shops, boot sales or jumble sales to raise extra money for their cause. However, whenever selling or re-selling goods, organisations must understand and follow the legal requirements and regulations to ensure they do so safely.

What can you sell?

All items that are offered for sale must have been inspected and tested, and should be deemed safe for sale. This includes items such as clothing and ornaments; you cannot sell any item that is unsafe. You can sell most electrical items, however, they must comply with current safety regulations, should carry the manufacturers trademark and should have operating instructions.

According to the Charity Retail Association, most charity shops sell clothing, books, toys, ornaments, kitchenware, DVDs, music, computer games and furnishings. With some also choosing to sell furniture and electrical appliances. A small number also sell bought-in goods.

What can't you sell?

Generally, any items with damage, cracks, missing plugs or leads or any other issues, should be avoided if there is any risk that the damage could cause an injury. In addition, because of the challenge involved in knowing the history, safety and condition of the items, you may consider not selling second-hand curtains, electric blankets, microwaves, fairy lights, cookers, furniture without legally-required labelling, any safety equipment or any items that may have been subject to a product recall notice.

Clothing

All clothing should be inspected to ensure it is clean and safe to be sold, bought and worn. In addition, to prevent injury and strangulation, the General Product Safety Regulations 2005 prohibit the sale of an outer garment with a hood, where a hood cord is fitted and the Nightwear (Safety) Regulations 1985 restrict the sale of certain items due to flammability.

Electrical Items

Any acceptable electrical appliance should be inspected and, if deemed necessary, inspected by a competent person; it is strongly recommended that electrical items are tested before resale. They should never be sold without inspection and testing and, once tested, should be recorded and tagged to ensure compliance with these rules.

Furniture

The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 govern the sale and supply of new and second-hand furniture and applies to retailers, second-hand shops and charity shops. The regulations apply to any upholstered domestic furniture, including cushions and pillows.

You can only sell compliant furniture and you should be able to tell that furniture complies due to a permanent label attached to the item. The label is normally headed 'carelessness causes fire' and then details the constituent parts and their testing detail. If the label has been removed or re-attached, the item cannot be sold.

More Information

You can find out more from the Charity Commission's [guidance on how charities may lawfully trade](#) and from the [Charity Retail Association](#).