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''A'' purchases a tire which is represented as being guaranteed for the life of the tread. After 75 percent of the tread is worn, the tire fails. The dealer from whom ''A'' seeks an adjustment under his guarantee is currently selling the tire for $15 but the ''adjustment'' price of the tire is $20. ''A'' receives a credit of 25 percent or $5 toward the price of the replacement tire. This credit is applied not on the actual selling price but on the artificial ''adjustment'' price of $20. Thus, ''A'' pays $15 for the new tire which is the current selling price of the tire.

Under the facts described in this illustration the guarantee was worthless as the purchaser could have purchased a new tire at the same price without a guarantee. If 50 percent of the tread remained when the adjustment was made, the purchaser would have received a credit of $10 toward the $20 replacement price. He must still pay $10 for a replacement tire. Had the adjustment been made on the basis of the actual selling price he would have obtained a new tire for $7.50. Thus, while deriving some value from his guarantee he did not receive the value he had reason to expect under the guarantee.

(b) Accordingly, to avoid deception of purchasers as to the value of guarantees, adjustments should be made on the basis of a price which realistically reflects the actual selling price of the tire. The following would be considered appropriate price bases for making guarantee adjustments:

(1) The original purchase price of the guaranteed tire; or

(2) The adjusting dealer's actual current selling price at the time of adjustment; or

(3) A predetermined price which fairly represents the actual selling price of the tire.

Whenever an advertisement for tires includes reference to a guarantee, the advertisement should also disclose, clearly and conspicuously, the price basis on which adjustments will be made. Such disclosure of the price basis for adjustments should be in terms of actual purchase or selling price, e.g., original purchase price, adjusting dealer's current selling price, etc. A mere reference to a guarantor's ''adjustment price,'' for example, would not satisfy this disclosure requirement. In addition, written material disclosing the basis for adjustments should be made available to prospective purchasers at the point of sale, and if the third method of adjustment is chosen, such written material should include the actual price on which guarantee adjustments will be made. [Guide 16]

§ 228.17 Safety or performance features.

Absolute terms such as ''skidproof,'' ''blowout proof,'' ''blow proof,'' ''puncture proof'' should not be unqualifiedly used unless the product so described affords complete and absolute protection from skidding, blowouts, or punctures, as the case may be, under any and all driving conditions. [Guide 17]

§ 228.18 Other claims and representations.

(a) No claim or representation should be made concerning an industry product which directly, by implication, or by failure to adequately disclose additional relevant information, has the capacity or tendency or effect of deceiving purchasers or prospective purchasers in any material respect. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to, representations or claims relating to the construction, durability, safety, strength, condition or life expectancy of such products.

(b) Also included among the prohibitions of this section are claims or representations by members of this industry or by distributors of any component parts of materials used in the manufacture of industry products, concerning the merits or comparative merits (as to strength, safety, cooler running, wear, or resistance to shock, heat, moisture, etc.) of such products, components or materials, which are not true in fact or which are otherwise false or misleading. [Guide 18]

§ 228.19 Snow tire advertising.

Many manufacturers are now offering winter tread tires with metal spikes. Certain States, or other jurisdictions, however, prohibit the use of such tires because of possible road damage. Accordingly, in the advertising of such products, a clear and conspicuous statement should be made that the use of such tires is illegal in certain States or jurisdictions. Further, when such

tires are locally advertised in areas where their use is prohibited, a clear and conspicuous statement to this effect must be included. [Guide 19]

PART 233—GUIDES AGAINST DECEPTIVE PRICING

Sec.
233.1 Former price comparisons.
233.2 Retail price comparisons; comparable value comparisons.
233.3 Advertising retail prices which have been established or suggested by manufacturers (or other nonretail distributors).
233.4 Bargain offers based upon the purchase of other merchandise.
233.5 Miscellaneous price comparisons.

AUTHORITY: Secs. 5, 6, 38 Stat. 719, as amended, 721; 15 U.S.C. 45, 46.

SOURCE: 32 FR 15534, Nov. 8, 1967, unless otherwise noted.

§ 233.1 Former price comparisons.

(a) One of the most commonly used forms of bargain advertising is to offer a reduction from the advertiser's own former price for an article. If the former price is the actual, bona fide price at which the article was offered to the public on a regular basis for a reasonably substantial period of time, it provides a legitimate basis for the advertising of a price comparison. Where the former price is genuine, the bargain being advertised is a true one. If, on the other hand, the former price being advertised is not bona fide but fictitious—for example, where an artificial, inflated price was established for the purpose of enabling the subsequent offer of a large reduction—the ''bargain'' being advertised is a false one; the purchaser is not receiving the unusual value he expects. In such a case, the ''reduced'' price is, in reality, probably just the seller's regular price.

(b) A former price is not necessarily fictitious merely because no sales at the advertised price were made. The advertiser should be especially careful, however, in such a case, that the price is one at which the product was openly and actively offered for sale, for a reasonably substantial period of time, in the recent, regular course of his business, honestly and in good faith—and, of course, not for the purpose of establishing a fictitious higher price on which a deceptive comparison might be based. And the advertiser should scrupulously avoid any implication that a former price is a selling, not an asking price (for example, by use of such language as, ''Formerly sold at $_____''), unless substantial sales at that price were actually made.

(c) The following is an example of a price comparison based on a fictitious former price. John Doe is a retailer of Brand X fountain pens, which cost him $5 each. His usual markup is 50 percent over cost; that is, his regular retail price is $7.50. In order subsequently to offer an unusual ''bargain'', Doe begins offering Brand X at $10 per pen. He realizes that he will be able to sell no, or very few, pens at this inflated price. But he doesn't care, for he maintains that price for only a few days. Then he ''cuts'' the price to its usual level—$7.50—and advertises: ''Terrific Bargain: X Pens, Were $10, Now Only $7.50!'' This is obviously a false claim. The advertised ''bargain'' is not genuine.

(d) Other illustrations of fictitious price comparisons could be given. An advertiser might use a price at which he never offered the article at all; he might feature a price which was not used in the regular course of business, or which was not used in the recent past but at some remote period in the past, without making disclosure of that fact; he might use a price that was not openly offered to the public, or that was not maintained for a reasonable length of time, but was immediately reduced.

(e) If the former price is set forth in the advertisement, whether accompanied or not by descriptive terminology such as ''Regularly,'' ''Usually,'' ''Formerly,'' etc., the advertiser should make certain that the former price is not a fictitious one. If the former price, or the amount or percentage of reduction, is not stated in the advertisement, as when the ad merely states, ''Sale,'' the advertiser must take care that the amount of reduction is not so insignificant as to be meaningless. It should be sufficiently large that the consumer, if he knew what it was, would believe that a genuine bargain or saving was being offered. An