



A big cow pushed me

A word of advice about your rights when you have damaged something in the shop.

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So you are wandering around the shop and turn around suddenly. Crash clatter smash! Your oversized handbag has just taken out a display of vases. The shop assistant is at your side in a moment. She scowls and says "You'll have to pay for that!" Do you have to? What are your rights when you have damaged something in the shop?

When you enter a store you have a responsibility to take care around goods for sale. The law says you have to "exercise due care". This means you must take reasonable care not to damage whatever goods you are handling.

Supervising children

If you bring children into a shop, you are responsible for adequately supervising them. If they break something, the store can ask you to pay for the goods that have been broken. Don't rely on the shop staff to watch your child.

Store at fault

Sometimes the store may have caused or contributed directly to the damage. For example, if the vases were on a wobbly shelf and there is no warning to customers to be careful. In a case like this, the store can't ask you to pay for the damaged goods as the store itself did not take adequate care.

Accidental damage

You may not have to pay for the damaged goods when an event outside of your control leads or contributes to the damage. For example you were rushing out of the shop because there was a fire alarm and on the way you were pushed by the crowd and bumped the vases off the shelf.

How much do you have to pay?

This depends on the value of the product and perhaps any loss of profit from the store now being unable to sell those goods to another customer. You may also have to pay for any damage to shop fittings that you caused. In many cases the loss will equal the retail price of the goods.