

## HOW TO SOLVE YOUR PROBLEMS

### Dry Cleaning

Once you have decided what your rights are, you will need to take a series of steps to solve your problem. It may seem a long procedure, but it does work.

- ▶ Be certain that the fault was not caused by normal wear and tear.

You will now need to contact the dry cleaner straight away and report the problem.

- ▶ Either visit, phone or write to the dry cleaner. If you visit, take the item with you. If you write, briefly set out the problem and ask the dry cleaner to get in touch with you. See the sample letter enclosed. Send your letter by Recorded Delivery. Include a copy of any documents. Don't send originals. Start keeping a record of what happens for future evidence.

- ▶ Ask to speak to, or write to, the manager or owner. Explain your problem, keep calm but be firm. Make it clear whether you want a re-clean, a refund, a repair or compensation. Remember you may be entitled to a re-clean, refund or repair plus compensation. If a repair turns out to be unsatisfactory, you may still be entitled to a refund plus compensation. Don't demand something you're not entitled to.

Your problem may well be solved at this stage. WELL DONE! Put the pack away for future use.

- If there is doubt about your claim or the dry cleaner refuses to offer reasonable help, ask if the firm is a member of a trade association. If so, you can contact the association as they may help sort out your complaint.
- If the problem still remains you must write to the dry cleaner. See the sample letter enclosed. If the firm is part of a group ask for the head office address and send them a copy of your letter as well. Send your letter by Recorded Delivery (You must go to the Post Office for this). Keep a copy of each letter.
- If the dry cleaner replies and asks for more information, be as helpful as you can. This may help the dry cleaner solve your problem. Keep a copy of any reply you send.
- If you get no reply to your letter, send the dry cleaner a reminder. See the sample letter enclosed and send a copy of your last letter. Remember to keep a copy of both letters. Send your reminder letter by Recorded Delivery.
- If the dry cleaner offers to do something, but not what you have asked for, you can either accept the offer or negotiate for a better offer. Be reasonable in what you are prepared to accept. Sometimes it can be better to compromise. Only you can decide this. (Keep a copy of every letter you write).

Most problems should be solved by this stage. If yours isn't and you still feel you have a valid claim -PRESS AHEAD.

- If the dry cleaner doesn't reply to your letters, refuses to do anything, or makes a final offer you are not prepared to accept, you will have to think about going to Court. Only a Court can order the dry cleaner to sort out your problem. Most claims can be settled in the County Court in England and Wales, the Small Claims Court in Northern Ireland, or the Sheriff Court in Scotland. This doesn't need to involve a solicitor. You can pick up further leaflets that explain fully the procedure from the Court.
- If you decide to take the dry cleaner to Court you will have to prove what the fault is and that the dry cleaner is responsible. See the other green leaflet IDENTIFYING THE FAULT.

Remember, Court is a last resort.

- Before you go to Court, think carefully.

Ask yourself:

- Will I be able to find the trader?  
It is your job to find him/her.
- Have I got evidence?  
It is your job to prove your case.
- Has the dry cleaner got money to pay what the Court may award?  
It's not worth suing a person or limited company if they have gone bust.

If you have lost money on faulty dry cleaning, don't waste more money on a case you cannot win.