

Farepak Food and Gifts Limited Update

Latest information:

- Farepak Food and Gifts Limited of Westmead Industrial Estate Swindon went into administration on 13 October 2006 at 4.30pm. This means that the company is insolvent and cannot afford to pay its suppliers.
- The company has announced that customers will not receive hampers, vouchers or gifts.
- The company will not be sending out refunds.
- The administrators will investigate what assets the company has. Customers MAY receive some of their money back but it will definitely not be a full refund.
- If customers do receive any money back it will not be for many months – almost certainly not until after Christmas.
- Anyone owed money by the company should notify the administrators of their claim as follows:
 - by post – Kings Wharf, 20-30 Kings Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 3EX
 - by completing the online form at www.farepak.co.uk
 - by 'phone – Claim Registration Line: 0870 066 9826 (open from 8am to 8pm 7 days a week)
 - by fax – 01793 606057
- The administrators will be in contact with all those who have registered claims by the end of November.
- Farepak customers' money is covered by a bond but the Hamper Industry Trade Association tell us that the bond is not sufficient to cover all monies owed to Farepak customers.
- A meeting was held on 21 October at the DTI with the company's administrators and the British Retail Consortium (BRC). The BRC has accepted in principle the idea of a goodwill gesture for Farepak customers. The BRC is now talking to retailers about what they might be able to provide.

Advice to Customers:

- Don't pay any more money to the company or your agent
- If you pay by Direct Debit cancel this with your bank immediately
- Don't send any paperwork to the company– keep it safe as it is your proof of what you have paid. If you are asked to hand over paperwork at a later stage only hand over photocopies.
- If your agent has collected money from you but has not yet paid it over to the company they should give it back to you and amend your book to show it has been returned to you.
- If your hamper cost more than £100 and you made even part-payment on a credit card you may be entitled to a refund from your credit card

company. Contact Consumer Direct on 08454 040506 for more advice.

- If you have any outstanding choice vouchers these will no longer be accepted by stores. The amount of any unused choice vouchers will be added to any claim you have against the company.
- Our current understanding is that any other vouchers that you have (i.e. not Choice Vouchers) are still valid and can be used.
- The joint administrators state that any hamper and voucher related monies received after their appointment will be refunded in due course.
- The joint administrators will return any cheques sent after Farepak went into administration in the week commencing 23 October 2006.
- For further advice call Consumer Direct on 08454 040506

Advice to Agents:

- If you are holding money that you have collected from customers do not send it to the company.
- Any money you are holding for customers should be handed back to those customers and their payment book should be signed to show the money has been returned.
- Keep your paperwork safe and up to date – do not send it to the company at this stage. If you are asked to send your paperwork make sure that you keep copies for your own records.
- You will not receive any more commission. Your claim for commission will be part of your claim against the company. You may receive some of this money back when the company's assets have been dealt with by the administrators.
- The joint administrators state that any hamper and voucher related monies received after their appointment will be refunded in due course.
- The joint administrators will return any cheques sent after Farepak went into administration in the week commencing 23 October 2006.
- For further advice call Consumer Direct on 08454 040506

Keeping up to date:

- Check the company's website for latest information:
www.farepak.co.uk
- Alternatively call Consumer Direct for advice on 08454 040506

Advice for customers considering buying hampers in future:

- There is always a risk in paying for anything up front.

- Reduce the risk by choosing a company that is bonded (but remember that a bond might not be sufficient to pay back all or any of your money if your hamper company does go into administration).
- If the company takes credit cards and the hampers costs more than £100 you can get extra protection by paying on a credit card (but not a debit card).