

India's biggest e-commerce compliance update

What the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2026 change for marketplaces, sellers and shoppers- and what to fix before it bites.

Notified: 9 Sept 2026

Effective: 1 Jan 2027

Why the rules changed: five problems regulators are done ignoring

- Misleading discounts
- Search result manipulation
- Dark patterns in checkout and sign-up flows
- Delayed grievance redressal
- Lack of transparency in online marketplaces

The 2026 amendment pushes for a more transparent, fair and consumer-first digital marketplace.

1. Price transparency: No more inflated discounts

- **30-day price rule** — a discount must show both the current price and the lowest price offered in the last 30 days.
- **No inflated discounts** — sellers can't raise prices just before a sale to advertise an exaggerated "70% OFF".

More transparency, fairer pricing, greater consumer trust.

2. Search algorithm neutrality: Rankings must mean what they say

- Marketplaces can no longer manipulate rankings or product visibility to mislead shoppers.
- Ranking factors must be disclosed in plain language, listed in order of importance.

Consumers finally see why a product ranks where it does.



3. Dark patterns: Manipulative UX is now a compliance risk

- **Regulatory violation** — Interfaces that push, trick or pressure a consumer into a choice they didn't mean to make move from "UX complaint" to regulatory violation.
- **Annual self-audit & public certification** — Platforms must conduct an annual self-audit for compliance with dark pattern rules and prominently display a compliance certificate on their platform.

Audit UI/UX, strip dark patterns, and set up an annual audit mechanism to publish compliance certificates.

4. Grievance redressal: Complaints now run on a clock

- **NCH integration mandatory** — every platform connects to the National Consumer Helpline.
- **48-hour acknowledgement** — for every consumer complaint.
- **30-day resolution** — grievances closed within one calendar month.

Faster resolution, real accountability for platforms.

5. Data governance & fair competition: Your data can't quietly favour the house brand

- No using seller or consumer data to favour the marketplace's own private labels without express consent.
- No hidden or bundled fees added automatically at checkout.
- Loyalty programmes (Prime, VIP tiers) stay exempt.
- Sponsored ads must be clearly marked, not disguised as organic results.

6. Seller & product disclosures: What every listing must now show

- Full importer details and country of origin on every imported product.
- Seller's legal name on invoices in the same font size as the marketplace's name.
- GSTIN, MSME status, address, return policy and expiry/best-before dates disclosed pre-purchase.

What Should Businesses Do Now?

Practical Steps to Prepare for the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2026

- Rebuild pricing to show the 30-day benchmark
- Audit sale campaigns and discount claims
- Publish ranking parameters in plain language
- Strip dark patterns out of the UI/UX
- Connect to the National Consumer Helpline
- Meet the 48-hour / 30-day grievance clock
- Review how seller & consumer data is used
- Update seller onboarding & disclosures



The Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2026 are more than a compliance update. They signal a shift towards greater transparency, accountability, and consumer trust in the digital marketplace.



***Stay compliant. Stay transparent.
Stay consumer-first.***

The businesses that prepare early won't just manage regulatory risk; they will earn consumer trust and build a lasting competitive advantage well before the deadline hits.