



147 Shore Drive • Somerville, Massachusetts 02145

(617) 666-5958 • edgar@consumerworld.org

www.consumerworld.org

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CONTACT: Edgar Dworsky
617-666-5958

**WITH NO OFFICIAL STATE SALES TAX HOLIDAY DECLARED,
MASS. RETAILERS CREATE THEIR OWN**

(BOSTON) - The Legislature's decision to forgo the annual sales tax holiday this coming weekend has prompted some Bay State retailers to create their own.

In fact, since early July, retail stores -- primary furniture dealers -- have been promoting double, triple, even quadruple sales tax savings to entice shoppers into their showrooms. (See attached chart.)

"Retailers know that shoppers hate paying sales tax on large purchases, so it can be a big lure for many to offer savings equivalent to the sales tax," explained Consumer World founder Edgar Dworsky. "Nonetheless, in a world where 30, 40, and 50 percent off sales are commonplace, I still shake my head when shoppers pack the stores to get a mere 6.25 or 12.5 percent off."

Traditionally, the second or third weekend in August has been declared a sales tax holiday by the Legislature. This year, however, because of a budget deficit, state leaders said they could not afford the estimated \$25-\$30 million of lost revenue over the two-day event. This is only the second time since 2004 that the state opted to forgo it (2009 was the other).

Massachusetts is not the only state taking a pass on a sales tax holiday this summer. Kansas, North Carolina, Nebraska, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin have also said no to retailers. But 17 states will still have a tax-free holiday this year, according to the Tax Foundation.

The "create-your-own" tax-free holiday movement seems to be limited primarily to furniture dealers in Massachusetts, but a few jewelers and home furnishings firms have also hopped on the bandwagon. Each of the following furniture stores has promoted storewide sales tax discounts for certain dates in August.

Furniture Stores' Sales Tax Discounts

<u>Retailer</u>	<u>Sales Tax Discount</u>	<u>Planned Expiration*</u>
Bernie & Phyl's	double	August 7
Boston Interiors	double	August 15
Cabot House	single	August 22
Cardi's Furniture	double	August 8
Chair Fair	double + 1/2%	August 31
Circle Furniture	single	August 21
Jordan's Furniture	double	August 21
La-Z-Boy	quadruple	August 18
Marty's Furniture	double	August 31
Rotmans	double	August 21
Sleepy's	triple	August 11

*Dates may be extended, contact stores to check.

source:ConsumerWorld.org

Some stores are offering additional savings with zero percent financing offers, free delivery, or other merchandise discounts and promotions.

Consumer World recommends that shoppers evaluate whether a mere 12.5% discount is enough savings to pull the trigger on a major purchase now. It may be worth waiting if the store traditionally offers a bigger sale later in the year.

Consumer World®, launched in 1995, is a Boston-based, public service consumer resource guide with over 2000 links to everything "consumer" on the Internet. **Edgar Dworsky**, the founder and editor of ConsumerWorld.org and MousePrint.org, is a former Assistant Attorney General in the Consumer Protection Division of the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office.

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