

For Immediate Release
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Wal-Mart Ordered to Pay \$ 1.4 Million For Overcharging California Customers

San Diego County District Attorney [Bonnie M. Dumanis](#) and California Attorney General Edmund G. Brown Jr. today announced a four-year investigation of Wal-Mart stores that has resulted in a \$1.4 million judgment against the retail giant in the state of California. [Wal-Mart](#) is accused of charging customers more than the advertised or posted price on items when they were scanned at check-out counters.

“The consumer is the winner today, after one of the nation’s largest retail stores was held accountable in a court of law for unfair business practices,” said DA Dumanis. “This judgment demonstrates how diligent state regulators and prosecutors are being about protecting consumers.”

The case was filed jointly by the San Diego County District Attorney's Office and the California Attorney General’s Office in San Diego Superior Court alleging Wal-Mart stores in California charged customers more than the currently advertised or posted price on items (scanner violations), in violation of unfair competition and false advertising laws.

The judgment requires Wal-Mart to pay \$1.2 million in penalties, \$190,621 in costs to 30 weights and measures agencies and prosecutors’ offices, and \$50,000 to a Consumer Protection Prosecution Trust Fund.

Further, the judgment prohibits Wal-Mart from charging an amount greater than the currently-advertised price for items in the future and requires every Wal-Mart store in California to maintain a “Get It Free” program for four years. Anytime an employee learns that a customer is being charged or has been charged a price for an item that is higher than the lowest currently advertised price, the Wal-Mart employee must give the customer that item for free, or deduct \$3 from the price if the item costs more than \$3. Wal-Mart must post a sign at every check-out stand in California stores, informing customers of the program.

The case against Wal-Mart was based on 315 inspection reports from 30 California counties, as well as consumer complaints about overcharging on a total of 1,043 items. The investigation began in 2004 and was conducted by county weights and measures inspectors statewide. There was no admission of wrongdoing or liability by Wal-Mart, which cooperated with prosecutors to reach a stipulated judgment.

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