

Shopping from Asia



What to watch out

Find out what to look out for to minimise the risk of losing money and making unsuccessful purchases. Step by step, we explain what you should keep in mind.



Businesses take advantage of the trust that consumers place in major social media platforms and treat them as a method of reaching a wide range of customers. They use ad profiling and sponsored posts promoting clothing, accessories, or other products tailored to users' interests to increase the likelihood of clicks and visits to their websites.

Some sellers want to deceive us. The first contact with a potentially dangerous website increasingly happens via ads that appears on social media platforms such as Facebook. The Office of Competition and Consumer Protection (UOKiK) receives reports that foreign entities impersonate existing Polish brands or use shop names that suggest a connection with local boutiques, thereby misleading consumers.



Expectations



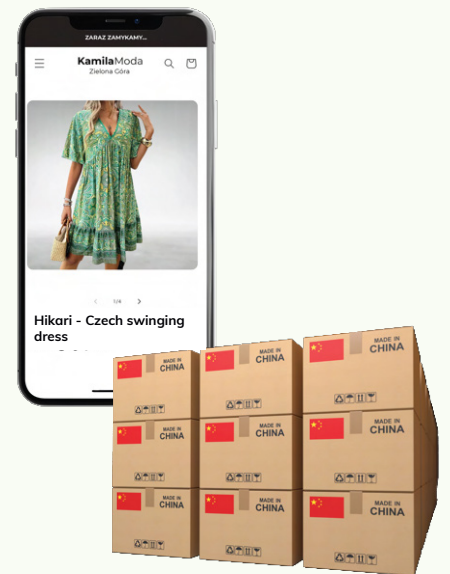
Reality

Do I know who I am buying from?

Shop name

Dishonest foreign traders often use addresses that refer to Polish brands or local boutiques or combinations of Polish names, words, and city names, e.g. “Anna Zielona Góra”, “Kraków Nowakowski”, or “Gadżety Paweł”.

Sometimes these names include typos – this could be a seemingly insignificant dash or hyphen or two characters being swapped. Sellers mislead consumers by suggesting that the business is Polish, when in fact we may be buying from a company in a distant Asian country.



Website domain

Check the full website address. Suspicious sites may have unusual or foreign-sounding domain extensions (e.g. .xyz, .lol, .top) or use popular domains such as .com or .pl, which makes them difficult to identify.

Terms and important details

Before making a purchase, scroll down to the bottom of the page and look for tabs such as: Terms and Conditions, Privacy Policy, General Conditions, Return Policy. If these subpages do not clearly state the name of the entity responsible for the store, you may be dealing with a potentially dishonest operator.



What should be included in the terms and conditions?

- Full name of the responsible entity
- Address of the registered office
- Tax Identification Number (NIP) and/or National Court Register number (KRS)
- Contact details (e-mail, telephone)

If these details are missing or unclear, you may be dealing with a potentially dangerous website. The terms should not limit themselves to the address or contact data without further specification.



The terms may include the information that the store is not operated by a Polish company, but by a foreign entity. If the registered office is not located in Poland, your order may not be fulfilled or your claims not recognised.

Pay attention to the address indicated for returns or exchanges.

Seller or intermediary

If the terms state that the store does not sell products directly, but only acts as an intermediary, you are dealing with dropshipping.



Dropshipping is a legitimate business model, but it may cause difficulties for consumers, such as:

Long delivery times – products are often shipped directly from China, which means that they may take several weeks to arrive.

Difficulty with returns – some dropshipping shops refuse to accept returns and direct customers to the actual seller.

Difficult contact – in case of problems, communication with involved parties may be limited.

Low product quality – photos in an online store may not reflect the actual appearance of the products.

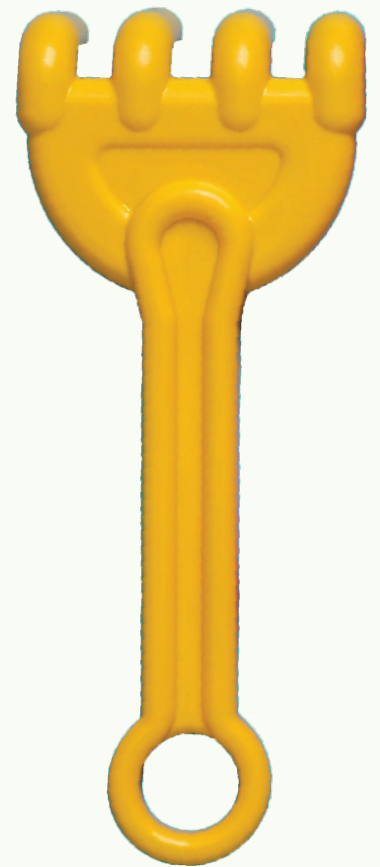
If terms mention “intermediary” or “intermediation”, you need to find out who you are actually buying from. The seller should be identified on the website with clear information about their responsibilities and those of the intermediary. If sales are conducted via a platform, its responsibilities should also be clearly defined.

Every entrepreneur is obliged to clearly and unambiguously inform that they provide dropshipping services. However, some try to hide it.

Dropshipping



Expectations



Reality

Am I being manipulated?

Emotional appeals and preying on sympathy

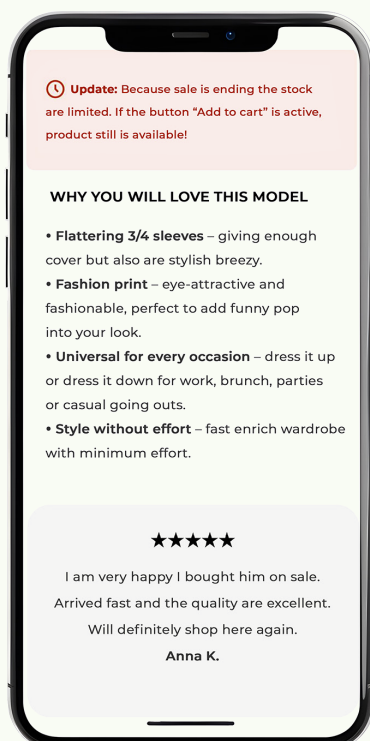
Dishonest sellers often appeal to emotions and beliefs in order to exploit our commitment. The scenarios may vary – the collapse of a family business, support for a new local business, or the preservation of a long-standing tradition of a Polish brand. They copy real-life descriptions and stories to make us act – buy things.



Flashy slogans and big promotions

“Sale up to 90% off”, “warehouse clearance”, “limited stock”, “exclusive codes”. The purpose of such messages is to make consumers feel that they are missing out on an opportunity and encourage them to make a quick purchase decision. Timers counting down promotion times or windows showing how many people are viewing or have bought a product are common examples of unfair market practices called dark patterns.

Fake store



Who wrote this – warning errors

Many dangerous online stores use automatic translations, so site information – product descriptions and terms – may contain linguistic errors.

How to spot a suspicious website?

- Contains illogical sentences or grammatical errors.
- Terms and conditions are imprecise and unclear – for example, vague references to a website instead of a specific company address.
- Content copied from other sites – identical terms can be found in various online stores.

If the terms seem unclear or automatically generated, shopping at the store may be risky.

What can I do?

If you suspect that a site is fraudulent, report it to the relevant authorities:

- ✓ **CERT Polska** – monitors and combats internet threats. You can report a suspicious shop at: incydent.cert.pl.
- ✓ **Police** – if you are a victim of fraud, file a criminal complaint.



For problems with purchases from foreign entities based in the European Union, contact the [European Consumer Centre](#).

For issues with products purchased from Polish sellers or intermediaries, [consumer ombudsmen](#) can provide advice. Find out more about [consumer assistance](#).

