



FORT SAM HOUSTON LEGAL ASSISTANCE OFFICE **Helpful Information About Contracts**

With very few exceptions, contracts are legally binding on the parties that sign the contract. When you do not understand a clause in a contract don't sign it! In many instances people will not understand a particular provision in a contract and will ask the seller what the provision means. You should never rely on the oral representations made by the seller because they are usually not binding on the contract.

Never sign a contract that has blank lines spaces. When you have signed a contract it is presumed that you understand the terms and conditions of the contract and that you intend to be bound by them. You should keep a file containing all your contracts so that if a dispute should arise you can defend your rights. In the event that you lose your copy of the contract the business you have contracted with is obligated to give you another copy.

Generally, door-to-door sales are prohibited on a military installation, but you are likely to encounter door-to-door salesman off-post. Door-to-door sales usually include sales that are made outside of the seller's normal place of business. The law, in door-to-door sales, permits a three-day "cooling off" period in which a consumer may cancel the contract by notifying the seller. The consumer does not need a reason to cancel the contract. When the contract is cancelled within the three-day period, it is voided in its entirety. It is important to note that if you have received any merchandise, you must make the merchandise available for the seller or return it to the seller's place of business at the seller's expense.

Remember, it is important to know and understand what you are signing because you will be legally responsible for all the terms and conditions of the contract, not just the ones you have read. Make sure you read the entire contract, even the small print. If you do not understand what a particular provision means, show it to someone other than the seller, who can explain it to you. Be cautious of any high-pressure sales tactics. When a deal seems too good to be true, it probably is.

If you have any questions concerning a particular contract, call 221-2282 or 221-2353 to make an appointment with a legal assistance attorney.