5 Steps for Safer Internet Shopping

Be an informed internet shopper, get your goods without getting into trouble, and avoid post-purchase hassles by following these key tips:

1) **Shop** – know what you are looking for
   a) Find reputable product manufacturers or suppliers
   b) Read product reviews
   c) Buying on-line isn’t always the best deal
2) **Select** – consider who you are buying it from
   a) Use reputable sellers (e.g. Target.com, Amazon.com, Zappos.com)
   b) Purchase direct from manufacturer’s website or seller linked from manufacturer’s website
   c) Review the seller’s return policies and shipping charges – avoid surprises!
3) **Pay** – safely
   a) Use virtual or regular credit card or PayPal
   b) Don’t use check, money order, cashier’s check, debit card or Western Union
   c) Avoid checkout add-ons = extra $$$
4) **Document** – keep records
   a) Print the product page and print a copy of your order
   b) Keep e-mail messages from seller
   c) Keep a dated and detailed journal of post-sale problems
5) **Confirm** – the accuracy of your order
   a) Review order confirmation e-mail for accuracy
   b) Verify the accuracy of credit card charges
   c) Inspect the package immediately upon receipt

Other considerations:
- Does the seller apply CA sales tax? If not you may need to self-report
- If product is received damaged – take photos and contact seller immediately
- When buying from a shopping marketplace (e.g. eBay, Amazon), check the ratings and reviews of a seller before purchasing
- Don’t be led astray by advertising redirects – those pesky “ads” that take you to another website when you click on them
- On the web-page where you complete your sales transaction, make sure the URL (web-address line) begins with http:// (the s = secured) and shows a closed padlock icon, indicating you are on a secured transaction page