



**LifeSmarts**  
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## Key Points

### CONSUMERS DEMANDED SAFER PRODUCTS

Growing awareness of harmful food, faulty cars, and unsafe medicine led to calls for stronger safety standards. New laws protected people from hidden dangers in everyday products.

### ADVOCATES FOUGHT FOR THE RIGHT TO KNOW

Consumer activists, authors, and organizations pushed for truth in labeling, honest advertising, and clearer information so buyers could make informed choices.

### GOVERNMENT AND WATCHDOG AGENCIES STEPPED IN

New federal agencies were created to test products, set safety rules, and hold companies accountable for harm caused by their goods.

## Core Concepts

### THE ROLE OF CONSUMER ADVOCATES

Leaders like Ralph Nader exposed car safety issues and inspired a nationwide push for stronger consumer rights and protections.

### KEY LEGISLATION AND AGENCIES

Laws like the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act and the creation of the Consumer Product Safety Commission set standards still enforced today.

### TRUTH IN LABELING AND ADVERTISING

Efforts during this era forced companies to list ingredients, avoid misleading claims, and disclose product risks to consumers.

### IMPACT ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

Safer cars, child-resistant packaging, warning labels, and recall systems became the norm, saving lives and preventing injuries.

### GRASSROOTS MOVEMENTS AND PUBLIC

Community groups, media reports, and advocacy campaigns showed how ordinary citizens could push companies and lawmakers to take action.

### LEGACY OF THE MOVEMENT

Modern consumer rights—including transparency, accountability, and product safety testing—grew directly out of activism during this time.

# The Consumer Movement 1962 - 1978

## Additional Resources

### YouTube - How Cars Got Safe

See how The Consumer Movement contributed to the evolution of auto safety.

<https://bit.ly/45xiUVA>

### YouTube - Public Citizen / Ralph Nader

A look at Ralph Nader's work in consumer advocacy in the 60s and 70s

<https://bit.ly/410TMFE>

### Consumer Federation of America - History

Creation and evolution of a coalition dedicated to amplifying consumer interests

<https://bit.ly/41DIEQ8>

### America At Risk - A History of Consumer Protest

Documentary filled with archival footage on the history and influence of this country's consumer movement

<https://bit.ly/3J7rKIL>

## Listen to the Podcast



## Explore and Explain

1. What events or issues in the 1960s sparked the push for stronger consumer protections?
2. How did consumer advocates like Ralph Nader influence laws and public awareness?
3. What new laws or agencies were created during this time to protect consumers?
4. How did the Consumer Movement change the relationship between businesses and the public?

*Studying the Consumer Movement shows how activism and legislation can improve product safety, transparency, and consumer rights.*

# The Consumer Movement

## Acronyms

### CPSC

Consumer Product Safety  
Commission

### NHTSA

National Highway Traffic  
Safety Administration

### OCA

Office of Consumer Affairs

### TILA

Truth in Lending Act

### UL

Underwriters Laboratories



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## Vocabulary

### CONSUMER ADVOCACY

Public efforts to support stronger protections and rights for buyers

### CONSUMER MOVEMENT

A push in the 1960s-70s to improve safety, labeling, and transparency

### CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY ACT (1972)

Created an agency to recall unsafe products and set safety rule

### ESTHER PETERSON

Advocate for product labeling and education; led the Office of Consumer Affairs in the 1960s

### MAGNUSON-MOSS WARRANTY ACT (1975)

Gave consumers the right to understand and enforce warranties

### NATIONAL TRAFFIC AND MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY ACT (1966)

Created safety standards for cars and required seat belts

### RALPH NADER

Wrote *Unsafe at Any Speed*, which exposed car safety issues and sparked consumer reforms

### RIGHT TO KNOW

The idea that consumers have a right to clear, accurate info about products they use

### TRUTH-IN-ADVERTISING

The requirement that ads must be honest and not mislead consumers

### WHISTLEBLOWER

Someone who reports unsafe or unethical practices within a company

