



# NEWS FROM SCDCA

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS  
Carri Grube Lybarker, Administrator



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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### *SCDCA Cited in National Complaint Survey Report*

**Columbia, SC...** A consumer complaint received by the South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs (SCDCA) is highlighted in the *2011 Consumer Complaint Survey Report*, released by Consumer Federation of America and the North American Consumer Protection Investigators. The "What Consumers Should Do" section recounts an illegal car repossession complaint SCDCA successfully mitigated, resulting in the consumer receiving a new vehicle. "SCDCA staff is honored to have their hard work on this increasingly encountered problem recognized at the national level" said SCDCA Administrator Carri Grube Lybarker. "In the face of economic and other challenges, our agency continues to provide exemplary services in promoting and protecting the interests of South Carolina consumers."

The report also outlines the top complaints and total refunds obtained by 38 state, county and city agencies in 22 states. In 2011, the participating agencies received over **290,000 complaints** and garnered approximately **\$147 million in refunds**, credits and adjustments for consumers. SCDCA received nearly **5,000** of those complaints as well as **\$700,000** in savings for South Carolina consumers. The full report can be viewed at [www.consumerfed.org/pdfs/Studies.Top10ConsumerComplaintsSurvey7.31.12.pdf](http://www.consumerfed.org/pdfs/Studies.Top10ConsumerComplaintsSurvey7.31.12.pdf).

### *The Top Ten Complaint Categories of 2011*

1. **Auto:** Misrepresentations in advertising or sales of new and used cars, lemons, faulty repairs, leasing and towing disputes
2. **Credit/Debt:** Billing and fee disputes, mortgage modifications and mortgage-related fraud, credit repair, debt relief services, predatory lending, illegal or abusive debt collection tactics
3. **Home Improvement/Construction:** Shoddy work, failure to start or complete the job
4. **Retail Sales:** False advertising and other deceptive practices, defective merchandise, problems with rebates, coupons, gift cards and gift certificates, failure to deliver

*-more-*

5. **Utilities:** Service problems or billing disputes with phone, cable, satellite, Internet, electric and gas service
6. **Services:** Misrepresentations, shoddy work, failure to have required licenses, failure to perform
7. **(Tie) Internet Sales:** Misrepresentations or other deceptive practice, failure to deliver online purchases; **Landlord/Tenant:** Unhealthy or unsafe conditions, failure to make repairs or provide promised amenities, deposit and rent disputes, illegal eviction tactics
8. **Fraud:** Bogus sweepstakes and lotteries, work-at-home schemes, grant offers, fake check scams, the grandparent scam and other common frauds
9. **Real Estate:** Timeshare sales and re-sales, retirement communities and assisted living facilities, real estate fraud
10. **(Tie) Household Goods:** Misrepresentations, failure to deliver, faulty repairs in connection with furniture or appliances; **Home Solicitations:** Misrepresentations or failure to deliver in door-to-door, telemarketing or mail solicitations, do-not-call violations

In 2011, SCDCA's top complaints were Debt Collection (15%); Vehicles (12.5%); Utilities (10%); Credit (6%) and Real Estate (5%). For more details on SCDCA's complaint division productivity visit

[www.consumer.sc.gov/consumer/PressRelease/Documents/2012/12009.pdf](http://www.consumer.sc.gov/consumer/PressRelease/Documents/2012/12009.pdf).

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SCDCA aims to protect consumers from inequities in the marketplace through advocacy, complaint mediation, enforcement and education. To file a complaint or get information on consumer issues, visit [www.consumer.sc.gov](http://www.consumer.sc.gov) or call toll-free, 1.800.922.1594.

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