



SPOTLIGHT: Looking to Get Out of Your Timeshare?



Most timeshare resale and exit scams begin with an unsolicited phone call. If you receive unsolicited offers to help you get out of your contract or sell your timeshare, you should be skeptical and proceed with caution. Property records are open to the public and that's how many scam artists find their mark. "Representatives" from companies may call and tell you that they already have a buyer interested in your property. All you need to do is pay a fee and they will close the deal!

Don't let them fool you! Giving money before seeing a contract can leave you out hundreds, maybe even thousands of dollars. Follow these tips and always be on the lookout for red flags.

Do Your Research

- **Are they licensed?** Check to see if the agents working for the company are licensed to sell real estate. Do this by contacting the SC Real Estate Commission lr.sc.gov/re/timeshares.aspx.
- **Background the seller.** Use SCDCA's "[Search Complaints](#)" tool to see if we have any complaints on file. Also, do a quick internet search on the company. You'll often find out if someone is a scam artist or complained about regularly by doing this.

Know Your Rights

- **Written contract.** Timeshare resale service providers are required to give consumers a written contract including a complete description of the services offered, the length of the contract and SCDCA's telephone number and web address.
- **Five-day right to cancel.** Consumers have a right to cancel the timeshare resale contract within five business days.
- **Fee restrictions and escrow.** Timeshare resale service providers cannot charge for appraisals but may require marketing or advertising costs upfront if clearly provided for in the contract. Any additional money given to the timeshare resale service provider by the consumer must be held in escrow until the resale services are complete.

Consumers can file a complaint against a timeshare resale or exit service provider by calling (800) 922-1594 or by going to consumer.sc.gov, click "How Do I..." then the "File a Complaint?" option.

Know the Terms

- **Get it in writing.** When talking with a representative from the company, be sure to request all information and the contract in writing before you agree to anything.
- **Advertisements.** Ask about the company's advertisement strategy and how you can monitor the progress of any 'marketing' plan they might use.
- **Payment.** Make sure you understand the payment process. Will you have to pay upfront fees? Also, investigate the refund policy.

Last Steps

- **Ready to sign on the dotted line?** Not so fast— Read your timeshare documents fully and check with the resort to ensure that the sale and transfer of ownership goes off without a hitch. If you don't understand the process, ask questions or find a trusted friend or family member to help.
- **Before you pay a company to help you exit your contract or sell your timeshare,** ask the timeshare developer or the resort's management company about your options. The American Resort Development Association (ARDA) has a tool to help you identify the company that you need to contact. You can find their information at <https://responsibleexit.com/timeshare-developers/>.



Victim of a Scam?

Watch out for Round 2!

Consumers who fall prey to a timeshare scam can also be targeted a second time. This second scammer will offer to recover the funds lost in the initial scam. *Think it through, first:*

- Why would this caller know you lost money?
- Are they asking for more money to recover your losses?
- Are they claiming to represent a government agency? Don't be fooled!