



NEWS FROM SCDCA

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SCDCA Announces Multi-State/ Multi-National Travel Scam Initiative

Columbia, SC...The South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs (SCDCA) is taking part in a joint multi-state, multi-national law enforcement initiative, coordinated by the Federal Trade Commission, to combat deceptive travel promoters and timeshare resellers. Today's announcement coincides with the announcement of more than 83 civil actions by the FTC and 28 states; more than 85 criminal prosecutions brought by U.S. Attorneys nationwide and local law enforcement; and 24 actions by international law enforcement agencies in 8 countries.

Typically, deceptive timeshare resellers claim to have ready buyers or renters who will pay top dollar for consumers' timeshare properties and trick consumers into dishing out hefty up-front fees. The scammers collect up-front fees, but never deliver on the promises. A similar deceptive practice involves travel promoters tricking consumers into purchasing deeply discounted or "free" vacation packages supposedly worth thousands of dollars; however, most consumers receive nothing of value or are required to attend lengthy high-pressure timeshare sales presentations.

As a part of the initiative, SCDCA released a three-part "Spotlight" series on travel scams. To view the educational materials, visit our webpage at www.consumer.sc.gov (*Click "News Releases & Publications, then "SCDCA Spotlight"*) or click on the following links: [Vacation Buying Clubs: The Devil is in the Details](#), [Timeshare Resale: Avoiding the Scam Artists](#) and [Planning a Vacation? Look Out for Fraudulent Vacation Rental Listings](#). Consumers should also consider the following red flags to help spot a travel scam:

- You "won a free vacation," but you have to pay some fees first.
- The prize company wants your credit card number.
- They cold-call, cold-text, or email you unexpectedly. Before you do business with any company you don't know, call SCDCA and consumer protection agencies in the

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company's home state to check on complaints; then, search online for consumer complaints.

- They don't — or can't — give you specifics.
- You get pressure to sign up for a travel club for great deals on future vacations.
- You get a robocall about it. Robocalls from companies are illegal if you haven't given a company written permission to call you; even if you haven't signed up for the national [Do Not Call Registry](#).

SCDCA also supports new legislation introduced this year, House Bill 3491, which would offer protections to consumers when contracting with a timeshare resale company. Among other provisions, it would require timeshare resellers to use a written contract and give consumers a 5 day right to cancel a contract.

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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 or call toll-free, 1.800.922.1594.

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