



State of Connecticut
Attorney General George Jepsen

Quick Tips

A Consumer Guide to Travel Scams

Have you ever received an official-looking certificate or an unsolicited phone call notifying you that you have been selected to receive a wonderful vacation offer? All you have to do is make a call within 72 hours to claim your vacation and, much to your dismay, the first question the travel promoter asks is whether you have a credit card.

Have you ever received a certificate for travel from a merchant for purchase of merchandise, only to find that you have to sit through a timeshare or campground presentation? Or, when you did get to redeem the certificate, you found you had to pay significant hidden costs?

Unfortunately, too many “winners” have turned up as big losers, falling victim to scams that turn vacations into nightmares. By arming yourself with some basic knowledge about the travel industry, you can protect yourself from becoming the victim of a travel scam.

Identify the Scam

Some signs of a travel scam might be:

- You are pressured to provide an immediate payment to receive this “fabulous” opportunity.
- You are required to make advance payments without any written contract, leaving you without proof of the services you are supposed to receive.
- You may only carry out the transaction by telephone.
- You are required to come to a “showroom” to claim your prize and then find out you have to sit through a sales presentation.

Avoid the Scam

- Before agreeing to travel services, look for established, reliable travel agencies.
- Don't be pressured into a decision. Take your time.
- When purchasing travel packages, get the names of all hotels, airlines, car rental agencies, restaurants and other service providers involved. Check to confirm all reservations.
- Find out exactly when airline tickets will be delivered to you.
- Don't give out your credit card number or bank account information when dealing with a telemarketer, but do pay for travel services with a credit card so that you can seek a chargeback if the services were not received or as represented.
- Watch out for hidden charges for airfare, hotels, car rental, airport or port transfers, meals, gratuities, taxes, parking and upgrades.
- Get everything in writing so that you will be aware of all the details of your travel plans and know the extent of hidden charges.
- Inquire about refund policies if the travel provider cancels or if you should cancel. Ask if there are special provisions for illness or a family emergency.
- Inquire about the availability of travel insurance. Be sure to fully understand the scope of any travel insurance policy offered and what sorts of cancellations are included and what are not. Only purchase travel insurance from a reputable provider and be sure that any policy purchased meets your individual, anticipated needs.
- When in doubt, hang up the phone.

Resources

- For more information on travel scams, [visit the Federal Trade Commission's Web site](#).
- To file a complaint about a travel scam with the Office of the Attorney General, complete a complaint form located at www.ct.gov or email attorney.general@ct.gov.