

OFFICE OF THE NEVADA ATTORNEY GENERAL

Bureau of Consumer Protection Combating Utility Scams in Nevada



Overview

- The Bureau of Consumer Protection
- Utility Scams & Prevention Tips
- Consumer Complaints



What is the Bureau of Consumer Protection ?

- The Bureau of Consumer Protection (“BCP”) is a statutorily created division within the Office of the Nevada Attorney General.
- The executive head of the BCP is Consumer Advocate and Chief Deputy Attorney General Ernest D. Figueroa.
- The overall vision of the BCP is to enforce laws that seek to ensure Nevada consumers and businesses have a fair, honest, and competitive marketplace in which to work, invest, and obtain goods and services.



What does the Bureau of Consumer Protection do ?

- The mission of the BCP is to protect Nevada consumers, businesses, and the interests of the State of Nevada through the enforcement of consumer protection laws.
 - **Consumer Protection (Deceptive Trade)**
 - Protect Nevada consumers and businesses from deceptive and misleading conduct that occurs in the course of business transactions
 - **Unfair Trade Practices (Antitrust)**
 - Protect Nevada consumers and businesses from unfair business practices that threaten fair competition
 - **Public Utilities**
 - Represent the interests of the ratepayers before the Public Utilities Commission



What does the Bureau of Consumer Protection do ?

- The BCP also strives to protect consumers by informing them of fraudulent scams and schemes, and providing tips through consumer outreach and education.



Utility Scams & Prevention Tips

- Rooftop Solar Energy Scams
- Utility Imposter Scams
- Door-to-Door Sales Scams



Combating Rooftop Solar Energy Scams

- Scammers are capitalizing on the emerging market of solar to promote misleading statements and commit crimes.
 - In-person scams
 - Telephonic scams
 - Cyber scams



Combating Rooftop Solar Energy Scams

- What do in-person rooftop solar energy scams look like?
 - They involve sales representatives who come to consumers' doors.
 - The sales representatives fraudulently claim they are connected with a utility company and seek to perform energy assessments on consumers' homes.



Combating Rooftop Solar Energy Scams

- What do in-person rooftop solar energy scams look like?
 - While these sales representatives may be legitimately employed by a third party contractor, the connection they claim to have with the utility company is being misrepresented to consumers.
 - It is often this connection that helps gain consumers' trust.



Combating Rooftop Solar Energy Scams

- Educate yourself before making any rooftop solar purchase;
- Review the Renewable Energy Bill of Rights to know what information must be included in any contract related to your rooftop solar lease or purchase;
- Check with the Nevada State Contractors Board to confirm the solar contractor has an active license;
- Review the Public Utilities Commission's tips on selecting a solar contractor; and
- Always review the contract thoroughly before you sign.



Combating Rooftop Solar Energy Scams

- What do telephonic rooftop solar energy scams look like?
 - Fraudulent sales representatives often misrepresent the rights consumers have under the Renewable Energy Bill of Rights, found in Nevada Revised Statute 598.
- What do cyber rooftop solar energy scams look like?
 - Fraudulent solar companies often make false or misleading statements on websites and social media sites regarding their connections with utility companies, consumers' rights, or even current events in an effort to solicit business.



Combating Utility Imposter Scams

- Since most people have at least one utility, imposter scams involving utilities are common.
- The scammer pretends to be with the power company, water company, gas company, or any utility.
- The scammer claims that your bill has not been paid in many months, and that water/power/gas will be shut off soon.
- The calls often occur late in the afternoon or on a Friday.



Combating Utility Imposter Scams

- Remain calm.
- Do not pay the scammer.
- Know that utilities will not be shut off without written notice.
- Ask the caller to verify your account number, and the date and amount of last payment.
- Call the utility company directly at a number **not provided by the scammer** to verify any debt.



Combating Door-to-Door Sales Scams

- The scammer will sell a real utility account at a discounted price.
- The purchasing consumer is not aware that this utility account, while real, is fraudulent in and of itself. Generally, it has been opened with someone else's social security number.
- The purchasing consumer does not learn that the utility account is not even in his or her name until he or she receives the first bill.



Combating Door-to-Door Sales Scams

- A legitimate sales representative will wear a branded uniform with an official company logo. He or she will be able to immediately produce company-issued identification.
- Local municipalities may impose additional requirements on door-to-door sales representatives, such as requiring them to carry photo ID badges issued by the local police department. Do not hesitate to ask the sales representative for additional licenses or identification cards.
- If you have questions, call the company the sales representative is from using a verified number – not the number you received from the sales representative.



Utility Scams & Prevention Tips

The Office of the Nevada Attorney General is currently working with corporate partners to develop anti-scam educational materials for consumers regarding utility and telecommunication-related scams.



The Importance of Filing Complaints



Collecting complaints and information from consumers is one of the most effective methods the Office of the Nevada Attorney General has to determine whether a business is engaging in deceptive trade practices.



How Do I File a Complaint ?

- You can file a Complaint here:

Attorney General's Office

http://ag.nv.gov/Complaints/File_Complaint/



**STATE OF NEVADA
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**

100 N. CARSON ST., CARSON CITY, NV 89701 – TEL: 775-684-2200 – FAX: 775-684-2108
355 E. WASHINGTON AVE., STE 300, LAS VEGAS, NV 89101 – TEL: 702-496-3420 – FAX: 702-496-2748



COMPLAINT FORM

The information you provide on this form may be used to help us investigate violations of state law. Please be sure to complete all required fields. The length of the prosecution varies depending on the circumstances and information you provide. The Attorney General's office may contact you if additional information is needed. Supplemental materials can be attached to Section 6 of this complaint form, and if additional supplemental materials are required after submitting the form, please email us to attcomplaint@ag.state.nv.gov with COMPLAINT in the subject line.

*****ONLY COMPLAINTS THAT ARE SIGNED WILL BE PROCESSED*****

HAVE YOU PREVIOUSLY FILED A COMPLAINT WITH OUR OFFICE? ☐ YES ☐ NO
If so, what are the approximate dates of previously filed complaint(s)?

SECTION 1: COMPLAINANT INFORMATION

LAST NAME:		FIRST NAME:		MAIL
ORGANIZATION:				
ADDRESS:		CITY:	STATE:	ZIP:
PHONE/MOBILE:		EMAIL:		
AGE GROUP:	<input type="checkbox"/> UNDER 18	<input type="checkbox"/> 18 TO 59	<input type="checkbox"/> 60 AND OVER	
PRIMARY LANGUAGE:				

SECTION 2: TYPE OF COMPLAINT

<input type="checkbox"/> GENERAL INVESTIGATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> MISSING CHILDREN	<input type="checkbox"/> TICKET SALES
<input type="checkbox"/> HIGH TECH CRIME	<input type="checkbox"/> MORTGAGE FRAUD	<input type="checkbox"/> WORKERS COMP FRAUD
<input type="checkbox"/> INSURANCE FRAUD	<input type="checkbox"/> OPEN MEETING LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER
<input type="checkbox"/> MEDICAID FRAUD	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC INTEGRITY	

SECTION 3: MY COMPLAINT IS AGAINST

<input type="checkbox"/> INDIVIDUAL <input type="checkbox"/> BUSINESS <input type="checkbox"/> AGENCY			
NAME OF INDIVIDUAL/BUSINESS/AGENCY:			
ADDRESS:		CITY:	STATE: ZIP:
TELEPHONE NUMBER:		EMAIL:	
WEBSITE:			
DATE ALLEGED VIOLATION OCCURRED:			
WAS A CONTRACT SIGNED? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO			
HAVE YOU CONTACTED ANOTHER AGENCY FOR ASSISTANCE? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO IF SO, WHICH AGENCY?			
HAVE YOU HIRED AN ATTORNEY? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO IF SO, PROVIDE ATTORNEY'S CONTACT INFORMATION:			
IS COURT ACTION PENDING? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO			
DID YOU MAKE ANY PAYMENTS TO THE INDIVIDUAL OR BUSINESS? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO			
HOW MUCH WERE YOU ASKED TO PAY?		HOW MUCH DID YOU ACTUALLY PAY?	
DATE OF PAYMENT:		PAYMENT METHOD:	

Continue to Section 4 to describe complaint

Facebook: [@NevadaAgGeneral](#) Twitter: [@NevadaAG](#) YouTube: [@NevadaAG](#)

SECTION 4. DESCRIBE YOUR COMPLAINT:

➤ (to add attachments, see Section 5)

ATTN:AGCOMPLAINT@ny.gov or <https://www.attorneygeneral.nys.gov>

SECTION 5. EVIDENCE

List and attach photocopies of any relevant documents, agreements, correspondence or receipts that support your complaint. Copy both sides of any canceled checks that pertain to this complaint.

SECTION 6. WITNESSES

List any other known witnesses or victims. Please provide names, addresses, phone numbers, e-mail address and website information.

SECTION 7. SIGN AND DATE THIS FORM

(The Attorney General's Office will not process any unsigned, incomplete, illegible or unsigned form.)

I understand that the Attorney General is not my private attorney, but rather represents the public by enforcing laws protecting its citizens, detecting or unfair business practices. I understand that the Attorney General does not represent private citizens or private or other legal entities. I am filing this complaint to notify the Attorney General's Office of the activities of a particular business or individual. I understand that the information contained in this complaint may be used to establish violations of New York law in both private and public enforcement actions. In order to resolve your complaint, we may send copies of information to the person or firm about whom you are complaining. I authorize the Attorney General's Office to send my complete and supporting documents to me free of charge or to disseminate them in this complaint. I also understand that the Attorney General may need to refer my complaint to a more appropriate agency.

I certify, under penalty of perjury that the information provided on this form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

ONLY COMPLAINTS THAT ARE SIGNED WILL BE PROCESSED

SIGNATURE:

PRINT NAME:

DATE:

Facebook: [@NYAttorneyGeneral](#) Twitter: [@NYAttGen](#) YouTube: [NYAttGenTV](#)

➤ SECTION 8: OPTIONAL INFORMATION

GENDER: ☐ MALE ☐ FEMALE

ETHNICITY:

<input type="checkbox"/> WHITE/CAUCASIAN	<input type="checkbox"/> BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN	<input type="checkbox"/> HISPANIC/LATINO
<input type="checkbox"/> NATIVE AMERICAN/ALASKAN	<input type="checkbox"/> ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT OUR COMPLAINT FORM (CHOOSE ONE):

<input type="checkbox"/> CALLED/VISITED OUR CARSON CITY OFFICE	<input type="checkbox"/> SEARCH ENGINE
<input type="checkbox"/> CALLED/VISITED OUR LAS VEGAS OFFICE	<input type="checkbox"/> AG SOCIAL MEDIA SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> CALLED/VISITED OUR RENO OFFICE	<input type="checkbox"/> ATTENDED AN AG PRESENTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> NEVADA OFFICIAL/ELECTED OFFICIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

MARK ALL THAT APPLY

<input type="checkbox"/> INCOME BELOW POVERTY LEVEL	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY SERVICE MEMBER
<input type="checkbox"/> DISASTER VICTIM	<input type="checkbox"/> IMMEDIATE FAMILY OF SERVICEMEMBER/VETERAN
<input type="checkbox"/> PERSON WITH DISABILITY	<input type="checkbox"/> VETERAN
<input type="checkbox"/> MEDICAID RECIPIENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

Facebook: [@NevadaAttorneyGeneral](#) Twitter: [@NevadaAG](#) YouTube: [NevadaAG](#)

EMAIL: AGCOMPLAINT@ny.nv.gov ny.nv.gov

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

What are you hoping the Attorney General's office can do for you?

EMAIL: AGCOMPLAINT@ny.nv.gov ny.nv.gov

What Happens to My Complaint ?

- General Steps:

- Evaluation of Signed Complaints

- Potential Referral

- Investigation

- Possible Development into an Administrative/Court Case



ANY QUESTIONS ?

THANK YOU

