

a few good tips for consumers:

- Avoid offers that appear “too good to be true”
- Check to see if the business has the required business licenses
- Research BEFORE you buy
- Contact the BBB or a local regulatory agency to determine the number and nature of complaints filed against the business
- Never sign anything you haven’t fully read or understood
- Get oral guarantees in writing
- Businesses can set their own refund and exchange policies. Be sure to read them before purchasing
- Do not be pressured into buying. Take your time. Don’t let yourself be rushed
- Keep all receipts and documentation of the transaction
- If a problem arises, try to resolve the dispute with the business. Utilize their chain of authority to get resolution
- If you cannot resolve the dispute, file a small claims action, retain a private attorney, contact a mediation organization or file a complaint with the applicable regulatory agency

district attorney office locations

San Diego – Hall of Justice
 330 W. Broadway, San Diego, CA 92101
 (619) 531-4041

North County Branch – Vista Courthouse
 325 S. Melrose Dr., Ste. 5000, Vista, CA 92083
 (760) 806-4079

East County Branch – El Cajon Courthouse
 250 Main St., 5th Floor, El Cajon, CA 92020
 (619) 441-4538

South Bay Branch
 333 H St., Ste. 4000, Chula Vista, CA 91910
 (619) 498-5650

Juvenile Division – Juvenile Courthouse
 2851 Meadowlark Dr., San Diego, CA 92123
 (858) 694-4254

If you've been the victim of an illegal business transaction, call our hotline telephone number to report it:

(619) 531-3507



www.sandiegoda.com

THE DA'S CONSUMER PROTECTION UNIT



protection for consumers and businesses



San Diego County District Attorney

A Message from your District Attorney:

Everyone is a consumer. Whether you're purchasing a big-ticket item like a car, or doing your weekly grocery shopping, you rely on the honesty and legality of the businesses you patronize. Unfortunately, not everyone has your best interests in mind. Some businesses operate on the edge of the law, taking advantage of consumers.

The District Attorney's Office is committed to holding those companies accountable for unfair business practices and providing education about these rip-offs to the public.

As a consumer, you should be aware of current scams. Look out for false advertising, overcharges, and bait and switch schemes. Most importantly, do not be pressured into purchasing an item. And remember the adage: "if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is."

Our office works with federal, state, and county regulators to protect consumers and honest businesses. With your help, we can keep merchants honest and make sure consumers are treated fairly.

Summer Stephan
District Attorney,
San Diego County



Consumer Protection

The District Attorney's Consumer Protection Unit is a part of our Economic Crimes Division. It protects consumers and businesses against unfair and deceptive trade practices, false advertising, scams, and other unlawful business practices in the marketplace. We investigate and prosecute, if warranted, unfair or deceptive business practices that victimize consumers and/or law abiding business owners.



Goals of Enforcement

1. Treat every case with importance, no matter how small
2. Correct marketplace problem and ensure business compete on a level playing field
3. Deter criminals and unscrupulous business practices
4. Obtain court orders to stop unfair or illegal practices
5. Obtain restitution for aggrieved consumers

Common Sense Practices

- Use a credit card for payment if you aren't going to receive your purchase right away
- Verify that professionals you hire to do work are licensed
- Be alert to charity scams, IRS scams and Ponzi schemes
- When shopping online, understand that that "free trial" may come with a subscription that automatically renews; read all offers carefully
- Guard your personal information carefully. Check your credit reports and banking statements frequently

Regulatory Agencies You Can Turn To For Help

CA Attorney General	www.ag.ca.gov
CA Board of Cosmetology and Barbering	www.barbercosmo.ca.gov
CA Bureau of Automotive Repair	www.bar.ca.gov
CA Contractors State License Board	www.cslb.ca.gov
CA Dental Board	www.dbc.ca.gov
CA Department of Consumer Affairs	www.dca.ca.gov
CA Department of Motor Vehicles	www.dmv.ca.gov
CA Medical Board	www.mbc.ca.gov
Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement	www.dhs.gov
Federal Trade Commission	www.ftc.gov
San Diego County Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures	www.sdcounty.ca.gov/awm
San Diego County Sheriff	www.sdsheriff.net

and your local police department

