

Have You Been the Victim of a Consumer Crime?

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Better Business Bureau Foundation

Many of us may have been victimized without even realizing that what happened was against the law. Often the product, service or the repair is misrepresented to induce a purchase. Senior citizens and disabled individuals have special rights provided by California statute. If you have been subject to any of the following misrepresentations, you may be awarded restitution and punitive damages by the court:

- Being told that goods are original or new, if they have deteriorated or have been previously used.
- Being told that goods or services are of a particular grade, standard, or quality, when they are not.
- Goods or services are advertised without any intent to sell them as advertised.
- Being told that the current price represents a certain percent or amount of discount, when the product or service has never been sold at the pre-discount price.
- Being told that another product or business is somehow inferior to the product or service being sold, when they are not..
- Being told that a part, replacement, or repair is needed, when it is not.
- Being told that goods or services have sponsorship, approval, characteristics, ingredients, uses, benefits, or quantities, which they do not have.
- Being told that goods or services are of a certain brand or from a certain company, when they are not.

Whether or not these circumstances pertain to you, if you believe you have been taken advantage of, you should complain to the Better Business Bureau or your local law enforcement agency.

Be prepared with the following information:

- Everything you know about the business or individual that you believe committed the violation – name, address, phone number, license numbers (if any), and the name of the person who contacted you (if you have it).
- Supporting documents, including copies of advertisements, brochures (anything you were given), invoices, checks (including the backs of cashed checks).

- **A description of the alleged violation, including the sequence in which things occurred.**

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