Elder Consumer Protection Program

The Elder Consumer Protection Program at Stetson University College of Law’s Center for Excellence in Elder Law is an educational and information resource on general and legal matters regarding elder consumer protection and awareness. The program, which is supported by state funding, offers assorted materials and various services that provide and promote general knowledge, public awareness and assistance, and professional development and training.

The information contained herein is intended only as a brief overview on matters of general interest. It is not offered as legal advice, is not a definite statement of law, and is not a complete analysis of the area of law.

The applicability of law to a particular matter requires an exhaustive examination of the specific facts with the appropriate laws. If you have a specific legal issue or legal concern, you should always consult with an attorney for detailed legal advice.
**Price Gouging**
Price Gouging occurs when someone, during a declared state of emergency, charges unreasonable prices in the sale or rental of:
- Essential Goods (such as water, fuel, batteries, food, lodging, lumber, or generators); or
- Essential Services (such as tree services, debris removal, or damaged property repair).

**Help Protect Yourself**
- Plan ahead and be prepared
- Always keep emergency items on hand (e.g., drinking water, non-perishable food, necessary medications, candles, flashlights, portable radio, batteries).
- Shop Around and compare prices.
- Never pay with cash.
- Maintain detailed records of any purchases and transactions
- Get a specific and detailed receipt

**Charity Fraud**
Charity Fraud occurs when someone:
- Misuses or misappropriates funds donated to a legitimate charity; or
- Solicits donations for an illegitimate or unregistered charity.

**Help Protect Yourself**
- Only donate to well known, established charities. Be suspicious of charities arising quickly in connection with a disaster or event.
- Beware of intimidation, emotional appeals, and high-pressure tactics.
- Ask for specific detailed written information regarding the charity, and what your donation will be used for.
- Never give social security numbers, bank account information, or credit/debit card information.
- Pay by check made payable only to the charity. Never make cash donations.  
- Confirm the donation is tax deductible
- Get a specific and detailed receipt

**Suspect Something?**
Contact:  
Better Business Bureau  
By Telephone:  1-703-276-0100  
Online:  www.give.org  
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services  
By Telephone:  1-800-HELP-FLA (435-1352)  
Online:  www.800helpfla.com  
Internal Revenue Service  
By Telephone:  1-877-829-5500  
Online:  www.irs.gov/charities

**Home Repair Fraud**
Home Repair Fraud occurs when someone:
- Makes unnecessary repairs;
- Charges inflated prices;
- Performs repairs without having the necessary or proper qualifications;
- Uses inferior materials; or
- Collects advance payment for work that is never completed

**Help Protect Yourself**
- Require a detailed written estimate.
- Obtain at least two different estimates.
- Confirm and verify licensing and insurance.
- Ask for and check references.
- Avoid door-to-door and unsolicited sales.
- Never pay with cash
- Pay only when the work is completed and finished to your satisfaction.
- Get a specific and detailed receipt.
- Require all warranties or guarantees to be provided in writing.

**Suspect Something?**
Contact:  
Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation  
By Telephone:  1-850-487-1395  
Online:  www.myfloridalicense.com  
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services  
By Telephone:  1-800-HELP-FLA (435-1352)  
Online:  www.800helpfla.com

**Suspect Something?**
Contact:  
Florida Attorney General’s Fraud Hotline  
By Telephone:  1-866-966-7226  
Online:  www.myfloridalegal.com