

Consumer Complaints

The [federal, state and county](#) governments have each established agencies to assist with consumer complaints. If you are having a problem with a business or product, or you believe you have been cheated, defrauded or harassed by a business, you can file a complaint.

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Before You File a Complaint

- Try explaining your problem to the store salesperson that served you, or to the manager or owner of the business.
- Decide what action the business should be taking to resolve your complaint. You should know what you are asking the business to do before you approach them, otherwise your attempt to seek redress will be frustrating for both you and the business's representative.
 - If the business's representative agrees to resolve the complaint, put the terms of the resolution in writing and send it back to the business via "Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested." This gives you a legal record that the business received a copy of the terms.
 - If the business's representative does not agree to resolve the complaint, immediately put the details of your complaint in writing and send it to the president or owner of the business via "Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested." The letter should include the date of the transaction, the problem, and how you would like the problem resolved. Keep copies for your own records.
 - Find out if the business in question is a member of a business or industry association that governs proper business practices. In many cases, these associations may intervene on your behalf to resolve your complaint.

If you do not receive satisfaction on your own, you can seek the assistance of a governmental agency by filing a consumer complaint.

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Federal Resources

The [Federal Trade Commission](#) 's (FTC) Consumer Protection section can provide some assistance. While the FTC does not resolve individual consumer disputes, your complaint, comment, or inquiry may help them spot a pattern of law violations requiring law enforcement action. It can also help them recognize and tell people about larger trends affecting consumers.

[The Consumer Information Center](#) , a part of the U.S. General Services Administration, publishes a 144 page handbook of valuable information for the consumer. The handbook provides extensive advice, consumer tips, and a Consumer Assistance Directory. The Directory contains listings for national consumer agencies, better business bureaus, trade associations, and state and federal agencies.

To address the challenge of multinational Internet fraud, the United States participates with 19 other countries to offer econsumer.gov, a joint effort to gather and share cross-border e-commerce complaints.

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State

The State's top consumer watchdog is the [California Department of Consumer Affairs](#) (DCA). The mission of the (DCA) is to protect and serve consumers while ensuring a fair and competitive marketplace. They protect and serve consumers by making available information that educates them about their rights and responsibilities. They help ensure a competent and fair marketplace by establishing minimum standards of competency in over 100 business and 200 professional categories - including doctors, dentists, cosmetologists, contractors, and automotive repair shops. In addition, they answer consumer questions and provide mediation between a business and the consumer when a business has engaged in false, misleading or deceptive practices.

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County

The [Consumer Protection Unit](#) of the Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office processes complaints and also provides information about consumer transactions by answering questions from the public. Their mediation staff is available to assist consumers in resolving their disputes with business entities.

Call the Consumer Protection Unit at (408) 792-2880 to ask a question or request a complaint form.

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