



Recognize and Avoid Telemarketing Fraud

The Florida Telemarketing Act regulates the actions of telemarketing businesses. Here are some requirements under the act that consumers should be aware of:

- All non-exempt telemarketing companies must be licensed with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), and post a security bond of no less than \$50,000.00 prior to soliciting. Each individual telemarketer is also required to be licensed.
- It's a violation for companies to make sales calls before 8 a.m. and after 9 p.m. local time.
- At the beginning of each call, the telemarketer must state his or her true name, the company that they are representing and the product or services being sold.
- Before you make a purchase, verify the company and telemarketer are properly licensed. Also check out the complaint history of the business with the licensing agency, Pinellas County Consumer Protection and the Better Business Bureau.
- Make sure to get in writing all the information about the business, product/services and any warranties or guarantees offered.
- At the completion of each sale or agreement to purchase, the consumer must be informed of his or her cancellation rights, given the license number of both the business and the salesperson and the street address of the business.
- Beware of offers that sound too good to be true or require an upfront payment in order for them to "help" you.
- Don't provide personal or payment information over the telephone, unless you know who you are giving it to and how it will be used.
- If you don't recognize the number, don't answer the phone. If you do answer, it's ok to say "no" and hang up the phone.
- To avoid receiving unwanted telemarketing calls, you can register your home and cell phone numbers free of charge on the *Florida Do Not Call List* at www.fldnc.com or the *National Do Not Call Registry* at www.donotcall.gov.