

Nessel Releases Annual List of Top 10 Michigan Consumer Complaints

LANSING – Attorney General Dana Nessel today recognized National Consumer Protection Week by releasing her office’s Top 10 Consumer Complaints for 2018 to help consumers make well-informed decisions about where to spend their money. In 2018, the Michigan Department of Attorney General received a total of nearly 9,000 consumer complaints.

“This week, we’re reminding Michigan consumers of the tools and resources our office provides to protect Michiganders from scammers and unscrupulous businesses and organizations,” Nessel said. “Michiganders work hard for their money and as the state’s chief consumer advocate, it is up to us to help them understand their consumer rights and protect them from bad actors.”

Nessel's Top 10 list is compiled by analyzing the nearly 9,000 written complaints filed with the Attorney General's Consumer Protection team in 2018. The department recovered more than \$1.6 million in consumer refunds, forgiven debts and state recoveries in 2018.

Consumers can **submit a complaint** by visiting mi.gov/agcomplaints or by calling 877-765-8388.

Credit and Financial Concerns Tops Complaint List

Credit and Financial Concerns again topped the 2018 list with more than 900 complaints. About half of the 2018 complaints in this category continue to be about credit reporting and collection. Nearly 15 percent of the complaints in this category, the next highest number, were about credit agencies other than banks.

While the Top 10 complaint categories did not change from 2017 to 2018, several of their rankings did. Four of the 10 complaint categories kept their places; half moved up one; and complaints against personal service providers dropped from two to seven in 2018.

Top 10 Consumer Complaint Categories of 2018

- 1. Credit and Financial Concerns:** Since 2006, this remains the top consumer complaint category, with 911 complaints in 2018. Complaints in this category cover a variety of areas including debt collection and reporting, credit repair, payday lending, and mortgage brokering.
- 2. Telecommunications, Cable, and Satellite TV:** Moves up from three to two this year. This category includes complaints involving issues like robocalls, telemarketing, wireless

communications, and cable and satellite TV services. Despite moving up to the second spot, complaints in these categories were down more than 10 percent in 2018.

3. **Motor Vehicle and Automobiles:** Also moving up a spot from four to three, the total number of complaints in this category remained relatively steady. Complaints against used car dealers continue to top this category, with other top complaints involving motor vehicles and car bodies, new car dealers, and passenger car rentals.
4. **Internet:** Moving up a slot from five to four, the total number of complaints in this computer-based category went down by five percent. Almost half of these complaints involved online purchases and a significant number of complaints were filed against computer communication and internet service providers.
5. **Retail:** Up from six last year, retail complaints included complaints about general merchandise, food and furniture stores, business services, and eating and drinking places.
6. **Contractors:** The fifth category to move up a spot from last year's list are complaints about residential building construction services, landscaping services, plumbing, heating and air condition services, and special trade contractors. In 2018, consumers filed 20 percent more complaints than 2017.
7. **Personal Service Providers:** Down five slots from last year's No. 2 spot, complaints in this category went down by 43 percent. (2017's jump was directly attributable to the large number of complaints against western Michigan-based gym chain Family Fitness.) Complaints in this category additionally range from dating services and beauty shops to home security and tax preparation services.
8. **Landlord and Tenant:** Holding steady at eight, this category had a 15 percent increase with almost 500 complaints. Most of the complaints in this category involved apartment owners and managers; complaints against mobile home site operators and condominium associations accounted for about 10 percent each of the total complaints in this category.
9. **Health Service Providers:** Staying at nine, this category's total complaints decreased by 7 percent complaints in 2018. The category includes health service providers like doctors, dentists, hospitals and medical clinics.
10. **Gasoline, Fuel, and Energy:** This category remains steady at 10, with complaints against gasoline service stations and gas and electric services dominating this category.

Consumer Education Key to Prevention

Attorney General Nessel is committed to aggressively going after those who take advantage of Michigan residents.

The more consumers know about how scams work and the more careful they are in responding to requests for money or personal information, the less likely they are to fall for a scam artist. The Michigan Attorney General's Consumer Protection Unit offers several free seminars to learn how to spot and stop scams. In 2018, the Department provided almost 700 seminars throughout Michigan.

In honor of Consumer Protection Week, the Attorney General's team will host **two free seminars** on **Phone, Mail, and e-Scams:**

Lansing: Thursday, March 7, 2019 from 12:05 to 12:50 p.m.

- Mennen Williams Auditorium; 525 West Ottawa Street

Detroit: Friday, March 7, 2019, from 12:05 to 12:50 p.m.

- Cadillac Place – Room L150; 3068 West Grand Blvd.

And in April, the team will host **two free seminars on Identity Theft:**

Lansing: Thursday, April 4, 2019 from 12:05 to 12:50 p.m.

- Mennen Williams Auditorium; 525 West Ottawa Street

Detroit: Friday, April 4, 2019, from 12:05 to 12:50 p.m.

- Cadillac Place – Room L150; 3068 West Grand Blvd.

If you are interested in attending a presentation, please review our **calendar of events** to determine when we will be in your community.

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the Department's Freedom of
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General Freedom of Information Act
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