

## **BREAKING NEWS**

### **AG Schmitt Releases List of Top Ten Consumer Complaints of 2018**

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**Jefferson City, Mo.** - The Missouri Attorney General's Office received 116,912 consumer complaints in 2018. The Consumer Complaint Unit received 66,927 complaints and the No-Call Unit received 49,985 complaints. The top 10 Consumer Complaints in 2018 by industry were:

#### **1. No-Call Complaints (49,985)**

The Missouri Attorney General's Office received 49,985 complaints from consumers regarding No-Call violations and illegal telemarketing calls in 2018. No-Call complaints involve complaints about phone calls to Missouri residents by businesses or organizations soliciting the purchase of goods or services, despite that resident signing up for Missouri's No-Call list.

#### **2. Retail/Wholesale (2,842)**

The Missouri Attorney General's Office received 2,842 complaints from consumers regarding retail and wholesale companies in 2018. Most of the complaints involved purchases made through the internet, telephone, or mail and involved late deliveries or products that were never delivered. Other complaints involved the purchases of appliances, furniture, and other items with warranty problems, that were defective, or that did not work as advertised. Other retail-related complaints included issues with rebates, coupons, and gift cards.

#### **3. Solicitations/Publications/Subscriptions (2,419)**

The Missouri Attorney General's Office received 2,419 complaints from consumers regarding mail and phone solicitations for publications and subscriptions in 2018. These complaints generally involve the receipt of mail and phone solicitations regarding sweepstakes, lottery, and other solicitation scams. Most involved scammers promising a valuable prize or high-dollar award to entice consumers to send money, buy overpriced products or services, or contribute to a phony charity. Some consumers reported receiving a mailer that looks like an invoice or bill demanding payment.

#### **4. Financials (2,197)**

The Missouri Attorney General's Office received 2,197 complaints from consumers regarding disputes with financial institutions and debt collection companies in 2018. Complaints under this category involve loan servicing, foreclosures, debt collection, and other products, services, and practices by banks, mortgage companies, debt collectors, and other financial institutions and service providers. Our office works with consumers regarding complaints on loan modifications and foreclosures and will attempt to defer fees or foreclosures when appropriate. Debt collector complaints range from harassing collectors who threaten and repeatedly call attempting to collect a debt. Complaints regarding banks and financial institutions involve the imposition of fees and other charges occurring without notice to, or the consent of, consumers.

#### **5. Automotive (1,598)**

The Missouri Attorney General's Office received 1,598 complaints from consumers regarding automobiles, automotive dealers, and automotive repair shops in 2018. Automotive complaints often involve failure to deliver titles in a timely manner from the dealership. Other complaints involve shoddy repair work and service issues.

#### **6. Communications/Technology/Online Services (1,342)**

The Missouri Attorney General's Office received 1,342 complaints from consumers regarding communications, technology and online services in 2018. Many complaints related to telephone cramming and billing practices where consumers received a phone bill for services that they did not order or were charged unauthorized fees on their telephone bill from third parties. Other complaints related to billing disputes and misleading promotions.

#### **7. Home Repair/Construction/Real Estate (1,248)**

The Missouri Attorney General's Office received 1,248 complaints from consumers regarding home repair, construction, and real estate in 2018. Complaints involving home repair contractors are among the most common type of complaint received by the office. These types of complaints involve storm chasers going door-to-door asking for money up front and providing little to no work, contractors who accept upfront fees and do not provide any of the work, shoddy workmanship, and/or fail to honor home warranties.

#### **8. Timeshares/Travel Clubs (1,109)**

The Missouri Attorney General's Office received 1,109 complaints from consumers regarding time shares and travel clubs in 2018. Complaints involved allegations that companies promised to resell timeshares and failed to do so, that companies failed to provide deeds for time shares that consumers purchased, and that companies charged undisclosed fees or unexpectedly and continuously increased fees for maintenance and other related services. Complaints also involved the sale of travel club memberships that promised discounts, opportunities, or services that were worthless or far less than promised.

#### **9. Health (847)**

The Missouri Attorney General's Office received 847 health-related complaints from consumers in 2018. These complaints involved healthcare industry complaints, including billing issues regarding hospitals and doctor visits, supplemental purchases, and disputes regarding health insurance payments. These complaints also involved consumers who paid for health-club memberships only to have the club shut down soon after accepting their money.

#### **10. Professional Services (597)**

The Missouri Attorney General's Office received 597 complaints from consumers regarding professional services in 2018. Most of these complaints involved moving companies, towing services, job and professional search services, special event planners or facility owners, auction companies, funeral homes, cemeteries and other companies promising a professional service.

"My office is committed to ensuring that Missourians are protected from fraud and scams of all types," said Schmitt. "With a dedicated consumer protection team, the Attorney General's Office works every day to warn consumers of possible scams and investigate those who seek to defraud consumers."

The Missouri Attorney General's Consumer Protection Section has a dedicated team of consumer advocates, investigators, and attorneys who review and take action on the complaints received by the office. The Section mediates complaints between consumers and businesses, investigates scams, and takes legal action when necessary to protect Missourians and obtain restitution for those who have been wronged.

Attorney General Schmitt encourages Missourians to file consumer complaints by filing a complaint [online](#), by calling [800-392-8222](tel:800-392-8222), or by mailing a complaint to Missouri Attorney General's Office, Consumer Complaint Unit, [P.O. Box 899, Jefferson City, MO, 65102](#).

Consumers can register No-Call complaints by filing a complaint [online](#), calling 866-662-2551, or by mailing a complaint to Missouri Attorney General's Office, No Call Unit, P.O. Box 861, St. Louis, MO, 63188.

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