

The Elder Consumer Protection Program at Stetson University College of Law's Center for Excellence in Elder Law serves as an educational and information resource, to both professionals and the public, on general and legal topics regarding current and developing matters in the areas of elder consumer and financial protection and awareness. The program, which is supported by state and federal funding, offers assorted materials and various services that provide and promote general knowledge, public awareness and assistance, and professional development and training.

The content contained herein is intended only as a brief overview on matters of general interest. The content contained herein is not offered as legal advice, a definite statement of law, or a complete analysis of the particular matter. 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.

Elder Consumer Protection Program

Center for Excellence in Elder Law
Stetson University College of Law

1401 - 61st Street South
Gulfport, Florida 33707

Telephone: (727) 562-7888
Facsimile: (727) 345-1838

E-mail: elderconsumers@law.stetson.edu

Web: www.law.stetson.edu/elderconsumers

© 2011 Stetson University College of Law. All Rights Reserved.



STETSONLAW

The Center for Excellence in

ELDER LAW

ACCESS AND JUSTICE FOR ALL®

Elder Consumer Protection Program

Center for Excellence in Elder Law

1401 - 61st Street South

Gulfport, Florida 33707

**Disaster Fraud
Awareness**

Price Gouging

Home Repair Fraud

Charity Fraud

Elder Consumer Protection Program



STETSONLAW

The Center for Excellence in

ELDER LAW

ACCESS AND JUSTICE FOR ALL®

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, a 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.

Suspect Something?

- Contact the Florida Attorney General's Price Gouging Hotline at 1-866-966-7226 or www.myfloridalegal.com.

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 be provided in writing.

Suspect Something?

- Contact the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation at (850) 487-1395 or www.myfloridalicense.com.
- Contact the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services at 1-800-435-7352 or (850) 488-2221 or www.800helpfla.com.

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

- 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.
- Research and confirm the charity yourself before making any donation.
- Never give social security numbers, bank accounts, or credit/debit card information.
- Pay by check made payable only to the charity, and never make cash donations.
- Confirm the donation is tax deductible.
- Get a specific and detailed receipt.

Suspect Something?

- Contact the Better Business Bureau at www.give.org or (703) 276-0100.
- Contact the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services at 1-800-435-7352 or (850) 488-2221 or www.800helpfla.com.