

Knowing your rights this National Consumer Protection Week

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Column

By Lauren Galley, Regional Director, Bryan/College Station Better Business Bureau

Every year, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) recognizes National Consumer Protection Week. This year, it is held from March 3rd – 9th. The FTC states, "National Consumer Protection Week (NCPW) is a time to help people understand their consumer rights and make well-informed decisions about money." As an official NCPW partner, Better Business Bureau wants to inform consumers of the resources we have to offer them.

- **Business profiles.** A quick search on bbb.org can lead you to business profiles for any kind of service you might need. These profiles contain reviews, complaints, the business's BBB rating, and will show the BBB seal if they're an accredited business.
- **Customer complaints and reviews.** Learning from another consumer's experience is extremely valuable, and by seeing what comments they left on a particular business's profile, you can decide if that is the right business for you to work with.
- **BBB Scam Tracker.** Every year, consumers lose their hard-earned money to scammers and fraud. BBB Scam Tracker allows consumers to see which scams are popping up in their areas, and what signs to look out for. It's also a good resource for victims to report their stories to help others from falling into the same traps.
- **Military Line®.** Military families and veterans are more likely to be the targets of scams, since they have steady paychecks and are often younger. Military Line® offers a variety of resources to help military personnel and their families learn which scams to watch out for, and how to best keep their money safe.
- **Auto Line®.** BBB Auto Line® is a dispute resolution program that allows you to resolve lemon law complaints without hiring a lawyer. The program covers car warranty issues against participating manufacturers.
- **Request-A-Quote.** Planning an event, or need a last-minute makeover? Working on a budget? Request-A-Quote allows consumers to get quick and easy quotes for the services they need, from BBB accredited businesses.

BBB's vision is an ethical marketplace where buyers and sellers trust each other. Our mission is to be the leader in advancing marketplace trust. We accomplish these not only through providing exceptional resources to the community, but by:

- **Setting standards.** Accredited businesses must constantly uphold and maintain our standards for trust.
- **Encouraging and supporting best practices.** It is part of our mission to engage with and educate both consumers and businesses.
- **Celebrating marketplace role models.** We give Torch Awards to businesses that best exemplify our standards.
- **Addressing substandard behavior.** When we see businesses engaging in substandard behavior, we help resolve the issue.
- **Creating a community of trustworthy businesses and charities.** BBB's Wise Giving Alliance teaches consumers how to be sure their money is truly going to the causes they care about.

To learn more about what BBB has to offer consumers, visit bbb.org.

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