



Vacation Travel Packages

From the Office of Minnesota Attorney General Lori Swanson

The Minnesota Attorney General's Office urges consumers to safeguard themselves from deceptive vacation packages. Although many legitimate packages exist, misleading vacation packages can coax consumers into an experience far below their expectations.

If you have purchased or plan to purchase for a vacation getaway, consider the following tips before you purchase or leave:

Buy your vacation travel package from a business you know.

If you're not familiar with a company, check it out. Get its complete name, address and phone number. Several travel organizations belong to professional associations, including the American Society of Travel Agents, which has over 200 members in Minnesota, the National Tour Association, and the United States Tour Operators Association.

Beware of "you've won a prize" solicitations.

Businesses may call or fax you unannounced notices offering "deals" that sound too good to be true. Make sure you understand all the terms and conditions before you accept any prize.

Watch out for hidden costs.

These "deals" often contain hidden costs or the company may not be telling you that you must attend a sales presentation to qualify for the trip or discount.

Avoid immediate and rushed payments.

If a company is trying to rush you, they may be trying to scam you before you have enough time to think about it.

Verify arrangements with your travel agent before you pay.

Get everything in writing and consider whether you want cancellation insurance. Make sure and get names, addresses, and telephone numbers for accommodations, airlines, and cruise ships you will be using. The bottom line is to verify everything before you pay.

Consider using a credit card to make your purchase.

If you don't get what you paid for, you may be able to dispute the charges with the card issuer.

Be aware of the terms.

Read the fine print and watch out for travel opportunities that are "subject to availability" or can't be used during the holidays or peak seasons.

Resources

If you feel that you have been the victim of a deceptive travel package, you may contact the following agencies:

Office of Minnesota Attorney General

Lori Swanson

445 Minnesota Street, Suite 1400

St. Paul, MN 55101

(651) 296-3353 or (800) 657-3787

TTY: (651) 297-7206 or (800)-366-4812

www.ag.state.mn.us

Federal Trade Commission

Consumer Response Center

600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW

Washington, D.C. 20580

Toll free: (877) 382-4357

www.consumer.ftc.gov

American Society of Travel Agents

Consumer Affairs Department
675 N. Washington Street, Suite 490
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 739-2782
www.asta.org

National Tour Association

101 Prosperous Place, Suite 350
Lexington, KY 40509
(800) 682-8886
www.ntaonline.com

United States Tour Operators Association

345 Seventh Avenue, Suite 1801
New York, NY 10001
(212) 599-6599
information@ustoa.com
www.ustoa.com

Better Business Bureau

220 South River Ridge Circle
Burnsville, MN 55337
(651) 699-1111 or (800) 646-6222
www.bbb.org

