

# Telemarketing: Tips to Avoid Scams

consumer**brief**

A salesperson calls to offer you a “once-in-a-lifetime” chance to invest in gold coins. The salesperson assures you there’s no risk and guarantees a high return on your investment. Sound too good to be true? It is.

Telemarketing, selling products or services by phone, is an important and legitimate \$500-billion-a-year business. Telemarketing fraud, however, robs consumers of approximately \$40 billion every year. Scam artists peddle everything from overpriced and useless water “purifiers” to credit repair services and new scams are being invented daily.

The Federal Trade Commission passed a regulation aimed at stopping telemarketing scams. The new regulation:

- Prohibits telemarketers from calling you before 8 a.m. or after 9 p.m., and from calling if you have told them you don’t want to be called.
- Requires that telemarketers promptly disclose their identity; the purpose of the call; the nature of the goods or services being sold; the odds of winning prizes, if any are offered; the fact that no purchase is necessary to participate, and the method by which you can enter without making a purchase.
- Requires that telemarketers disclose refund and cancellation policies and whether refunds and exchanges are allowed.

Tougher regulations help, but you can play a key role in the fight against telemarketing fraud. Remember:

- Never give your credit card number over the phone unless you initiated the call.
- Never give your checking account number over the phone.

- Never give a telemarketer personal information about yourself, including medical information, driver’s license, Social Security or telephone calling card numbers.
- Never pay for a prize. That includes paying postage, shipping, handling or any costs associated with something a caller says you have “won.”
- Never allow a caller to pressure you into acting immediately on any offer.
- Never agree to any offer until you have seen it in writing.

***Remember.. If an offer sounds too good to be true, it probably is.***

## **IF YOU HAVE BEEN VICTIMIZED**

Write to the Office of Consumer Protection, Division of Consumer Affairs, P.O. Box 45025, Newark, New Jersey 07101 or call 973-504-6200 and ask for a complaint form. You may also contact us via e-mail at [AskConsumerAffairs@lps.state.nj.us](mailto:AskConsumerAffairs@lps.state.nj.us).



**800-242-5846 • [www.NJConsumerAffairs.gov](http://www.NJConsumerAffairs.gov)**

**Office of the Attorney General**



**New Jersey Division of  
Consumer  
Affairs**