



Fraud Watch  
Network

## July 2021 State Scam Alerts

Please consider publishing these alerts in your local publications, and share them on social media, too. AARP Maine will publish the alerts on their website [www.aarp.org/me](http://www.aarp.org/me) each Tuesday. If you have alerts to suggest, please send them to us and we will add them into our scam alert schedule. Questions? Suggestions? Contact Jane Margesson [jmargesson@aarp.org](mailto:jmargesson@aarp.org) or 207-229-5628 (cell).

### Week 1 - Door to Door Scams

Warm weather is here which means door-to-door sales crews are here, too. But what they're selling isn't always legit.

Be cautious anytime a stranger comes knocking, especially if the visitor is trying to sell you goods or services. Be wary of contractors who say they stopped by because they just happened to be in the neighborhood. The good ones are usually too busy to roam around in search of work. Also be on guard for high pressure tactics to make a quick decision for a steep discount, and requests for payment upfront. Your best bet is to proactively seek out services if you need them, versus reacting to an unexpected sales pitch. It's always okay to explain you don't do business at your front door (or to not answer when strangers knock).

Be a fraud fighter! If you can spot a scam, you can stop a scam.

Visit the AARP Fraud Watch Network at [www.aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork](http://www.aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork) or call the AARP Fraud Watch Helpline at 1-877-908-3360.

### Week 2 - Protect Your Device, Protect Yourself

Many scams originate right at your fingertips through your computer or smartphone. The good news is the way to block them is also within your grasp. Here are three tips to keep your devices safe from criminals.

Make sure your devices' operating systems are up to date; you should be able to set an auto-update feature that downloads the latest software when available. Next, make sure to change the password on your Wi-Fi router so it's different from the password it came with. If you have a lot of devices connected to it, they could be vulnerable if the router is compromised. Lastly, a password manager is a great way to create unique and hard-to-guess passwords for all of your online accounts and apps.



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Report scams to local law enforcement. For help from AARP, call 1-877-908-3360 or visit the AARP Fraud Watch Network at [www.aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork](http://www.aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork).

### Week 3 -- Rental Car Scams

America is open for business again and millions of people are traveling, or planning to. One thing you may run into is sticker shock - especially with rental cars. The lack of travel in 2020 led rental companies to sell a lot of their inventory of cars. Now that demand has spiked, supply is tight and prices are high.

Unfortunately, criminals are paying attention and posting fake rental car deals at rock bottom prices online. While everyone loves a good deal, doing business with an entity you aren't familiar with could be risky. Whatever your travel needs, stick to reputable websites with proven track records. If you do find a deal with an unfamiliar provider, do your research: look up the company name with "scam" or "complaint" and see what appears, and check out reviews.

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### Week 4 - Free Trial Offers (Negative Options)

Who doesn't love something for free? But beware, that "free trial offer" might mean months of payments that you didn't know you signed up for and will have a hard time canceling. These types of sales tactics are called negative options - a customer signs up for a free trial and unwittingly accepts a subscription - sometimes for a questionable product - often by not seeing a prechecked box in the very tiny print.

When it comes to free trials, research before you enroll. Fully understand the terms and conditions by reading the fine print. Keep a close eye on your credit and debit card statements so you spot unexpected charges right away. Contact your bank or credit card company to address the issue; calling the company you inadvertently signed up for a subscription with will likely get you nowhere.



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