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# MARYLAND COMMISSIONER OF FINANCIAL REGULATION CONSUMER ADVISORY

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## **Celebrating 2025 National Consumer Protection Week**

**March 2 – March 8**

The Office of Financial Regulation (OFR) is promoting consumer education and financial awareness during National Consumer Protection Week (NCPW), March 2 – March 8, 2025! NCPW is a time when government agencies, consumer protection groups, financial institutions, and organizations like OFR work together to share information about consumer rights and help people learn how to spot, report, and avoid scams.

**Keep reading to learn more about the top scams, how to avoid them, and where to access resources!**

Fraudsters are becoming increasingly sophisticated, using advanced technology, social engineering tactics, and ever-evolving schemes to deceive individuals and businesses. With the rise of artificial intelligence, deep-fake technology, and highly convincing phishing attacks, it is easier than ever for scammers to manipulate victims and steal sensitive information. Protecting your personal and financial data requires constant awareness, skepticism, and proactive security measures to stay one step ahead of evolving threats. As fraud tactics grow more complex, staying vigilant and being aware of the top frauds in your area is more critical than ever.

### **Top 10 Fraud Report Categories in Maryland**

According to the [Federal Trade Commission \(FTC\)](#), Maryland residents experienced losses of approximately \$139.4 million due to fraud in 2024. The top 10 reported categories of fraud in Maryland were:

- Imposter Scams
- Online Shopping and Negative Reviews
- Internet Services
- Business and Job Opportunities
- Health Care
- Telephone and Mobile Services
- Investment Related
- Prizes, Sweepstakes, and Lotteries
- Travel, Vacation, and Timeshare Plans
- Privacy, Data Security, and Cyber Threats

Other top fraud categories in Maryland include Credit Bureaus and Information Furnishers, Banks and Lenders, Auto Related, Debt Collection, and Credit Cards. View the [FTC's Fraud and ID Theft Maps](#) for more data and information.

## Financial Security Best Practices

Practicing strong financial security habits can help safeguard your personal and financial information from threats and bad actors. By staying informed, using secure passwords, monitoring your accounts and being cautious of suspicious communications you can reduce your risk and keep your money, identity, and credit safe. Here's how to implement best practices in your daily life:

- **Avoid Phishing Scams** – Never click links in unsolicited emails or texts regarding financial matters. Instead, visit the institution's official website directly. Beware of messages claiming, "You've won a prize" or "Your package is delayed," as they may be attempts to steal your identity.
- **Verify Sender Information** – Always check the sender's email address, regardless of the displayed name. If unsure, contact the institution using a verified phone number from an official statement or website.
- **Monitor Financial Statements** – Regularly review bank and credit card statements for unauthorized activity. Report any discrepancies to your financial institution immediately.
- **Check Your Credit Report** – Obtain your free annual credit report and review it for unfamiliar accounts or inaccuracies. See OFR's [Credit Reporting](#) fact sheet and visit the [FTC's website](#) for more information on your rights.
- **Strengthen Passwords and Use Multifactor Authentication** – Use strong, unique passwords with a mix of letters, numbers, and symbols. Enable two-factor authentication (2FA) for added security, such as using a password AND a unique code sent to you via text message.
- **Keep Software Updated** – Regularly update antivirus software on all devices to protect against cyber threats and ensure system security.
- **Avoid Phone Scams** – Never provide account information or verify your identity to unsolicited callers. If contacted by someone claiming to be from your bank, hang up and call the official number to verify the request.

See OFR's [Scams and Elder Fraud](#) fact sheet to learn more about cryptocurrency scams and other scams targeting older adults; and visit the FTC's website to [review the latest in consumer advice](#).

## Report Scams and Fraud

It is important that you report scams and instances of suspected fraud. Here are the actions you should take if you believe you have been targeted:

- **Notify Your Financial Institution, Lender, and Credit Provider:** If you suspect fraud, immediately call the number on your statement, invoice, or bill to inform your financial institution or provider about the incident.

- **Notify Law Enforcement:** Report the incident to your local police department and file a police report.
- **File a Complaint:** Report the scam to the Federal Trade Commission at [www.ftc.gov/complaints](http://www.ftc.gov/complaints). **If you have a complaint** about a financial provider **regulated by OFR**, contact us by calling 410-230-6077 or emailing [CSU.Complaints@maryland.gov](mailto:CSU.Complaints@maryland.gov). You may also submit a complaint **online**.
- **If you are an elderly victim** or assisting an elderly victim, contact the Department of Justice's National Elder Fraud Hotline 1-833-FRAUD-11 or 1-833-372-8311.

## About the Office of Financial Regulation

OFR is Maryland's consumer financial protection agency and financial services regulator. We make sure that financial service providers are treating Maryland consumers fairly, operating in a fiscally sound manner, and following state laws and regulations. Should you have a problem involving a **financial business or activity regulated by OFR**, please **use this form to submit a complaint** to our office. For questions, please email our Consumer Services Unit at [CSU.Complaints@maryland.gov](mailto:CSU.Complaints@maryland.gov) or call 410-230-6077.

**National Consumer Protection Week is a public education campaign sponsored by the Federal Trade Commission to help people understand their consumer rights and avoid fraud and scams.**  
**[Learn more about 2025 National Consumer Protection Week here!](#)**

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*The Office of Financial Regulation, a division of the Maryland Department of Labor, is Maryland's consumer financial protection agency and financial services regulator. For more information, please visit our website at [www.labor.maryland.gov/finance](http://www.labor.maryland.gov/finance).*



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