

W.VA. AG URGES CAUTION WHEN PLANNING A SUMMER VACATION

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CHARLESTON, WV (WOAY) — West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey reminded consumers Monday to exercise great caution when making travel plans this summer.

Just as West Virginians often look toward summer as the perfect opportunity to travel, criminals look on the season as a chance to burglarize houses and scam potential vacationers.

“Whether it’s the prospect of a free vacation or getting a truly unbelievable deal on a rental or plane fare, it is easy to get excited about seemingly great opportunities,” Attorney General Morrisey said. “However, crooks use these ‘great opportunities’ to bait consumers and not only ruin their vacations but their lives. The good news is that by exercising a small degree of caution, West Virginians can reduce the risk of misfortune.”

The Attorney General recommends the following advice to lessen the chance of becoming a victim:

- Consider posting vacation details to social media only after returning. Otherwise, thieves know when a home is vacant and thus an easy target.
- Remember the operative rule: If a deal sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- Get reviews of travel companies from reputable travel websites and/or family and friends.
- Paying with credit cards gives consumers the ability to dispute certain charges for services not provided.



- Be cautious of unsolicited calls offering a free vacation to a popular destination.
- Validate the physical address of the listed vacation property to ensure the property exists.
- Be wary of any company that only accepts payment via money order or pre-paid debit card.
- Beware of firms that ask for payment before confirming reservations. Most reputable travel agents will confirm before payment.
- Do not feel pressured to immediately accept vacation offers that are “good today only.”
- Know cancellation and refund policies.
- Confirm reservations before departure.
- Keep a close eye on banking statements during and following travel.

Consumers with questions can contact the Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division at 1-800-368-8808, the Eastern Panhandle Consumer Protection Office in Martinsburg at 304-267-0239 or visit the office online at <http://www.wvago.gov>.