

PRESS RELEASE

Colorado Department of Law
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ATTORNEY GENERAL UNVEILS TOP 2011 CONSUMER COMPLAINTS

DENVER — Colorado Attorney General John Suthers unveiled today statistics on the top consumer complaints for 2011 and the first two months of 2012 to mark the beginning of National Consumer Protection Week.

“Protecting consumers from fraud is one of the most important jobs of Colorado’s attorney general,” Suthers said. “Thanks to our aggressive outreach, warnings about prevalent scams and informing Coloradans on how to protect themselves, we have made great progress over the past five years. The growing number of complaints Coloradans submit to us highlights the strides we have made in informing consumers about types of fraud and how to report scams to us as well as our federal counterparts.”

During the 2011 calendar year, Colorado consumers filed 7,297 complaints with the Office of the Attorney General — a 12.9 percent increase over 2010’s total of 6,462 complaints and a 54.5 percent increase over 2009’s total of 4,723 complaints.

The top 10 types of complaints received last year were:

	Type of business	Complaints
1	Financial planning and management consultants	410
2	Utility complaints (cable and satellite television)	349
3	Mail fraud	264
4	Health and medical services	262
5	Tanning salons	159
6	Internet shopping services	146
7	Telephone (Cell phones and equipment)	141
8	Magazine subscription agents	127
9	Rebate offers	108
10	Roofing and guttering contractors	95

By business, the top 10 complaint-getters for 2011 were:

	Business	Complaints
1	Dalbey Education Institute	407
2	Corporate Controllers Unit	231

3	Heart Check America	189
4	DirecTV	167
5	At The Beach	157
6	Dish Network	107
7	National Energy Rebate Fund	103
8	Real Talk Network	81
9	CenturyLink	75
10	E-470 Public Highway Authority	65

In addition, the Attorney General's Office licenses and regulates collection agencies, lenders, creditors, and debt settlement companies. In 2011, the Office received 732 complaints against collection agencies. The most common complaint was that the collection agency attempted to collect an amount not due or harassed a consumer. By law, collection agencies may not disclose debts to third-parties not obligated to pay such as parents, children, employers and neighbors; may not call consumers before 8 a.m. or after 9 p.m. in the consumer's time zone; may not misrepresent the legal status of a debt; must honor a consumer's written request to cease telephone calls or cease all communication; and must provide verification of the debt upon a consumer's written request within 30 days after receipt of its initial collection letter disclosing consumers' rights.

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During January and February 2012, Colorado consumers filed 1,434 of complaints with the Office of the Attorney General. The top 10 types of complaints were:

	Type of business	Complaints
1	Financial planning and management consultants	77
2	Utility complaints (cable and satellite television)	55
3	Telephone (Cell phones and equipment)	31
4	Health and medical services	28
5	Magazine subscription agents	21
6	Automotive dealers	20
7	Roofing and guttering contractors	18
8	Internet service providers	18
9	Banks	17
10	Internet shopping services	17

The top 10 complaint-getters by business for January and February 2011 were:

	Business	Complaints
1	Dalbey Education Institute	76
2	DirecTV	21
3	Dish Network	16
4	Comcast	15

5	Verizon Wireless	14
6	Heart Check America	11
7	National Energy Rebate Fund	11
8	Open Range Communications	11
9	At The Beach	10
10	Universal Fidelity LP	9

If a consumer believes they have been defrauded or victimized by a Colorado business or nonprofit, they can file a report by visiting www.coloradoattorneygeneral.gov/complaint or by calling 1-800-222-4444. Consumers interested in receiving updates on the latest scams facing Coloradans as well as information on how to avoid being victimized can sign up for the Consumer Fraud Awareness newsletter by visiting www.coloradoattorneygeneral.gov/fraudawareness.

To learn more about the Office of the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Section and its recent cases, visit www.coloradoattorneygeneral.gov. To learn more about National Consumer Protection Week, visit www.ncpw.gov.