



Travel Right – 5 Tips for Avoiding Vacation Pitfalls

- **Get it in writing and read it carefully** – Before you pay any money, find out about all terms and conditions relating to airfare, hotels or tours, making sure you fully understand all conditions, fees, restrictions and the cancellation policy.
- **Pay by Credit Card** – Unlike paying with check or cash, you usually have the right to have credit card charges reversed if you do not receive what you paid for. Check with your credit card company for details about its charge-back process.
- **Confirm Travel Plans directly** – If you use a travel agent or tour company, it is good practice to confirm all your travel arrangements directly with the companies providing the transportation, hotel or car rental. Confirming hotel reservations also gives you the opportunity to verify the details of your accommodations, which may differ from how they are advertised.
- **Know Before you go** – Check with us to see if there are complaints against the companies you will be using before booking. Search on-line for reviews and recommendations. Keep in mind that unhappy customers are more likely to post reviews than happy ones, so use more than one source when making your decisions.
- **Beware of Solicitations offering “Free” Trips or Gifts** – Solicitations that require you to attend a sales presentation in order to receive a gift or prize are illegal in Maryland. The sales agents often use high pressure tactics and may misrepresent the quality or features of the travel product. In addition, “free” trips are seldom ever free. You will usually have to pay their higher costs for some services and/or pay “reservation” or “handling” fees. Most also use a difficult reservation process that makes it next to impossible to book the trip.

For more information on this and other consumer topics, or to obtain this factsheet in an alternative format, contact the Office of Consumer Affairs at 410-313-6420 (voice/relay) or consumer@howardcountymd.gov.