

Timeshare Scams

Timeshare Sales:

Buying a timeshare means that you and other people are all buying one property -- and sharing the time you spend in it, which is where the name comes from. Some timeshare properties guarantee you a week a year; others allow for up to 3 weeks annually.

All of them have you pay a portion of the property value itself, and all of them have you pay a 'common area' cost for upkeep on the building and grounds, etc. Most timeshare units are sold at a sales presentation, during which enticing incentives are offered just for attending.

Common incentives include discount or free hotel rooms, weekend getaway packages, or prizes. Many of these are legitimate, but there are also scams out there. Timeshares that are scams will offer very upscale incentives like a new car or boat or a luxury vacation. When high-value incentives like this are offered, beware! The presentation usually involves extremely high-pressure sales tactics.

Even worse, the timeshare presenters won't deliver what they promise or they'll charge a fee for the incentive for "delivery" charges or "administrative fees". Still worse, some companies supposedly "go out of business" after they've taken your deposit.

Tips to Avoid Timeshare Sales Scams:

- Don't ever, ever buy (or sell) while at the presentation. Sleep on it, and take the time to evaluate whether the deal is a good one.
- If you are offered a prize as an incentive, be sure to read the 'fine print' on the prize. Don't pay for anything.
- Read the contract and have it reviewed by an attorney. If the sales person promised you something that's not in the contract, don't sign the contract!
- If the presentation is too high pressure, leave. You have every right to leave when you want. Simply stand up and politely say 'thank you very much but we're leaving now'. Then go -- don't let them argue with you.
- Ask for references -- and call them. Ask for folks who have been happy and unhappy with the previous service.
- Don't ever call a 1-900 number to book a trip. It's almost always a scam.
- Google the company on the Internet to see if any complaints have been made either on message boards or to the Better Business Bureau.

Timeshare Re-Sales:

Timeshare owners are frequently told that a buyer is ready to go. After delivering this exciting news, the scammers then tell the owners that they have to pay an up-front fee before the sale can be completed. After the money is paid, the owners never hear from the company again.

Tips to Avoid Timeshare Re-Sales Scams:

- Do not pay in advance for services. Work only with companies that take their fee after the timeshare is sold.
- If you must pay a fee in advance, ask about refunds. Get refund policies and promises in writing.
- Research the company thoroughly. Contact the Better Business Bureau (<http://www.bbb.org/>) and ask if any complaints are on file. Also, research the company online to see if any complaints have been posted on the BBB's message boards or on complaint websites.
- Contact the Nevada Division of Real Estate (<http://red.nv.gov/>) and ask if the reseller's agents are licensed to resale timeshares.