

## Helpful Agencies & Resources

### Maryland Attorney General's Office, Consumer Protection Division

[www.oag.state.md.us/consumer](http://www.oag.state.md.us/consumer)  
410-528-8662  
1-888-743-0023

### Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, & Regulation

*Licenses professional and financial merchants including  
home improvement contractors*

[www.dllr.state.md.us](http://www.dllr.state.md.us)  
410-230-6001  
1-888-218-5925

### Federal Trade Commission

[www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov)  
202-326-2222

### Washington Consumers' CHECKBOOK Magazine

*Non-profit organization issues ratings on local businesses  
and is available in public libraries.*

[www.checkbook.org](http://www.checkbook.org)  
1-800-213-7283

### Consumer Reports

*Non-profit organization tests and reports on products  
and services and is available in public libraries.*

[www.consumerreports.org](http://www.consumerreports.org)

### Consumer World

*Consumer news and information.*

[www.consumerworld.org](http://www.consumerworld.org)

### Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition

*Non-profit grassroots consumer organization.*

[www.marylandconsumers.org](http://www.marylandconsumers.org)  
410-528-1591

### Montgomery County—Landlord/Tenant Complaints

[www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dhca](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dhca)  
240-777-3609

### Montgomery County—Cable TV Complaints

[www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cable](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cable)  
240-773-2288

### Better Business Bureau

[www.dc.bbb.org](http://www.dc.bbb.org)  
202-393-8000

## Montgomery County Office of Consumer Protection

100 Maryland Avenue  
Suite #330  
Rockville, MD 20850

### Telephone:

240-777-3636

### FAX:

240-777-3768

### Web page:

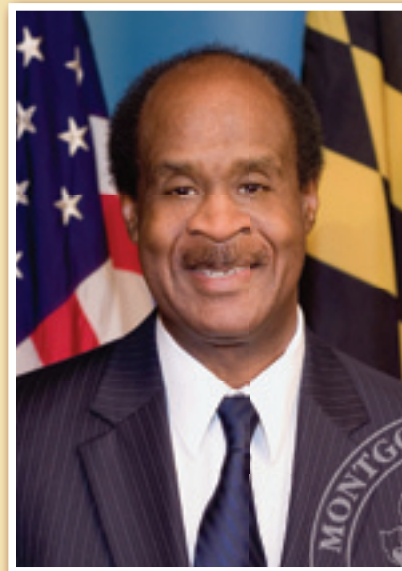
[www.montgomerycountymd.gov/  
consumer](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/consumer)

### Email Address:

[ConsumerProtection@  
montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:ConsumerProtection@montgomerycountymd.gov)

### Anonymous Consumer Tip Line:

240-777-3681



**Isiah Leggett**  
*County Executive*



Ensuring Integrity  
in our Marketplace



**Ensuring  
Integrity  
in our  
Marketplace**



**The Office of Consumer Protection (OCP)** is the Montgomery County agency responsible for enforcing consumer protection laws prohibiting unfair and deceptive business acts to ensure a fair marketplace for consumers and businesses. The office was established in 1971.

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## Complaints

OCP investigates and resolves thousands of consumer complaints regarding automotive sales and repairs, new home construction, home improvements, credit and financial issues, retail sales, internet services, and most other consumer transactions.

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## Law Enforcement

OCP issues civil citations and subpoenas, executes settlement agreements, conducts administrative hearings, and initiates legal action through the County Attorney. OCP works with agencies that prosecute criminal cases.

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## Education and Outreach

OCP provides pre-purchase information on its web page including the number of complaints filed against each merchant. OCP issues news releases, email alerts, and provides speakers to community organizations. Investigators are available for consultation by telephone, email, and in person.

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## Advocacy & Legislation

OCP testifies on consumer related bills and collaborates with other offices to enact new legislation in our rapidly changing marketplace.

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## Licensing

OCP licenses automotive repair facilities, towing companies, new home builders, appliance repair firms, and pawn shops & consignment shops.

**OCP is also responsible for the following programs:**

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### Commission on Common Ownership Communities

OCP serves as staff to the Commission on Common Ownership Communities which handles disputes between residents and their condominium or homeowner associations.

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### Energy and Environmental Advocacy

OCP works with other County agencies to advocate for the County's interests in obtaining the lowest possible utility rates consistent with environmental stewardship. OCP assists home sellers and buyers obtain information about utility usage and costs.

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### Domestic Workers

OCP administers a program requiring employers to negotiate and offer written contracts disclosing information about job conditions and benefits to certain workers employed in their homes. A model contract and resource information are available on OCP's web page.

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### Property Tax Disclosures

OCP administers several laws concerning the proper disclosure and advertising of estimated property taxes and charges to ensure that home purchasers do not receive misleading information. An online tax calculator is provided on OCP's web page.

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### New Home Sales Contracts

OCP enforces several laws related to the sale of new homes.

**OCP receives assistance from the following groups:**

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### Advisory Committee on Consumer Protection

Provides advice to OCP in carrying out its duties and functions. Members are appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council.

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### Builder's Board of Registration

Provides recommendations to OCP in reviewing license applications for new home builders. Members are appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council.

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## If You Have a Consumer Problem

First, explain your concerns directly to the merchant. If that does not work, contact OCP to file a complaint. A complaint form can be found on OCP's web page. Be sure to provide a copy of all related documentation when you file the complaint.

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## OCP Staff

OCP's investigators have expertise in many areas. Our dedicated staff includes automotive experts, Spanish speakers, attorneys, and volunteers. We are here to be of service to you.

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## OCP in the News

OCP's outreach and consumer education efforts are enhanced by media coverage regarding our activities. Staff frequently appear on local television and radio news programs, and are frequently quoted in local newspapers and magazines. Our staff have been quoted in national news publications such as the *New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Business Week*, and *US News & World Report*. Staff have also appeared on national television news programs such as *DateLine*, *Good Morning America*, *Prime Time Live*, *The Today Show*, and *48 Hours*. Links to media coverage are provided on our web page.

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## Consumer Tips

- Read all contracts and sales receipts carefully before you sign, and make sure to keep a copy. Do not sign blank documents.
- Never provide personal information over the telephone or computer unless you initiated the contact and can verify the identity of the merchant.

