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The Monthly Brief

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CRAIGSLIST CORNER

Craigslist is the most popular free resource for buying and selling items. It's also used to advertise housing, personal and business services, even job openings. It's popularity means scammers are also using it to target consumers with very clever cons.

In coming issues we'll feature the most common scams on Craigslist and give you tips on how to avoid them.

Craigslist Buyer Scams

Crooks posing as buyers will email or text an offer for your item at or above asking price. Originally targeting vehicles, the scam is now aimed at lower cost items like household goods and furniture.

The crooks will claim to be out of the area, deployed military, or anything that explains why they can't meet in person. Payment will be offered as a bank/cashier check and will arrive with an over payment.

You cash the check, keep the value of the item and wire transfer the overage back to scammer. Sometimes you'll be asked to send the cost of pick-up and shipping to a third party company also by wire transfer.

Either way the cashier's check bounces days or weeks later and the bank removes the funds from your account.

Avoid this scam by only accepting calls for your listed items. Take only cash payments and always meet in a public place like a local police department.

Find out more by visiting [Craigslist Scams Information Page](#)

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MVAP Program Announced

Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi recently announced the launch of the [Military and Veterans Assistance Program or MVAP](#).



This innovative program was created to provide assistance and education to military members and veterans on scams that target their community.

In addition, members of the MVAP team work directly with military service members and veterans who have been targeted, or their representatives, to help resolve their consumer protection related issues or find other outside assistance if necessary.

Areas where MVAP can provide assistance include Debt & Credit; Housing, False Military Association & Stolen Valor; Charity & Non-Profits; and Available Benefits.

Learn more and get help by visiting the MVAP [website](#) or by calling 1-866-9-NO-SCAM (1-866-966-7226). Also view and download the free [MVAP Resource Guide](#).

FLORIDA MOTOR VEHICLE REPAIR ACT



A real problem for Florida consumers is finding a reputable auto repair shop they can trust. Turning your car and your wallet over to an unscrupulous mechanic can be an expensive and usually avoidable lesson.

The **Florida Motor Vehicle Repair Act** regulates anyone who offers vehicle repair services to the public. It also lists all of the specific rights available to consumers before, during, and after repair work is performed.

The [Florida Department of Consumer Services website](#) provides information on how to find a reputable repair shop, your rights as a consumer, how written estimates work, complaint histories and even assistance if you've been ripped off.

Here are a few quick tips from the FDACS website when looking for a repair facility:

- Start looking before you need repairs; Don't just drop your car off at the closest shop
- Check if the shop [is registered](#) with the FDACS and search for a [complaint history](#)
- Start with small repairs or maintenance first and use your car's maintenance schedule to check the shop's suggestions.
- Always get a Written Estimate and Know Your Rights Under the FMVRA
- Download the ["Fixing It Right" brochure from the FDACS](#)