

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT USING STATE AGENCIES TO HELP RESOLVE YOUR CONSUMER COMPLAINT

- Government agencies cannot force a business to settle an individual's complaint, but the government's interest in a consumer complaint may convince a company to resolve the dispute.
- Many businesses are directly regulated by government agencies. These agencies receive complaints about the companies they regulate and investigate allegations that those business have violated the law. Consumers play an important role in alerting agencies to companies that are engaged in illegal practices. Even if the agency doesn't help you to resolve your complaint, it might be able to use your information to stop an unfair business practice.
- A state agency may still be able to help even if your complaint involves an out-of-state company. You can also contact a federal government agency to complaint about out-of-state companies. Government agencies usually prefer that you submit your complaint in writing and some have special complaint forms for consumers to use. Most agencies however, are not prepared to help people who walk into their offices.
- When you send a complaint letter to a government agency, provide your full name and return address and the name and address of the company you are complaining about. Briefly describe your complaint, why you are contacting the agency, and explain how you feel the agency can be of assistance to you. Decide what is an acceptable solution to you such as repair or replacement of the item, a refund, and exchange, a credit, a correction of the company's records, or the payment of damages. Make sure you have done everything that you were supposed to do to live up to your part of the transaction.
- Don't expect the government agency to file a legal action or enter into settlement discussions on your case. The agency, if it is able, may contact the subject company to open up communications. For example, it will verify that your complaint is against company it regulates, and if there appears to be a violation, it might ask that business to respond to your complaint by resolving the dispute or providing an explanation of its position.