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The Monthly Brief

Volume 9 Issue 6

June 2021

SENIORS VS CRIME

May is National Elder Law Month and National Older Americans Month. More than five million seniors call Florida home, with many moving here to retire. Sadly these same seniors are targeted for fraud by scammers and criminals.

Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody's office is offering [several resources](#) to assist seniors who have been scammed, defrauded, or exploited, including the Seniors vs. Crime Project.



Attorney General Ashley Moody

Seniors vs Crime

A Special Project of the Florida Attorney General
[https: Secured Site](https://seniorsvscrime.com)

The Primary Goal of the Seniors Vs Crime Project is to reduce the victimization of senior citizens who are often targeted for specific crimes or scams based on their age.

The Project accomplishes this by providing educational and crime prevention programs to senior citizen groups; investigating complaints, and seeking restitution for seniors.

Seniors vs. Crime also offers No-Charge (Free) Assistance with Civil Cases to assist seniors involved in [civil disputes](#) with contractors as well as other businesses or individuals who have defrauded or taken advantage of them financially.

Seniors vs. Crime also seeks the assistance of "[Senior Sleuths](#)" offering positions in reporting, investigating, and educating.

To learn more about Seniors vs. Crime and [locate project offices near you](#), visit them at [Seniorsvscrime.com](https://seniorsvscrime.com).

*AG Ashley Moody

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Moving Scams



According to the BBB, in 2020 over \$230,000 was lost to [fraudulent moving companies](#) and why using caution is key when hiring a moving company. Here are some of the top scams being reported:

No Show: Victims receive a quote and pay a deposit, but the "movers" never show up.

Over Weight: The moving company provides a quote based on expected weight but after loading the truck claim the load is over weight and an additional fee will apply. Often the additional fee is more expensive, sometimes double the original estimate.

Held Hostage: The movers provide an estimate, collect a deposit, and load your belongings on a truck. But the truck never arrives at its destination. Either your items are simply gone or the company demands an additional fee to have them delivered, basically holding the items hostage. Here are some tips on how to avoid these scammers.

Research for Warning Signs –Make sure the website includes [licensing](#), [registration](#) & insurance info, an actual business address (Google it), good reviews, and listed on the BBB. Check the [FMCSA website](#) for company info, tips, and helpful advice.

Be wary of unusual requests. If a mover asks for a large down payment or full payment in advance, that may be an indication of a fraudulent business.

Get Everything in Writing - Keep an Inventory—Ask Questions! [Trust Matters](#)

Get more info on how to avoid scams and have a better moving experience by visiting the [FL AG](#), [BBB's Scam Movers](#) and [search for Accredited Moving Companies](#) near you.

*BBB, FMCSA, FL AG

TEXT MESSAGE SCAMS INCREASING



Thieves are cranking up what's known as "smishing" scams using texts to try to steal your information, money, or both. The goal is to get you to click on a link that will go to a site that will ultimately try to get your personal info, credit card or financial info, charge fees, and even install malware on your device. In fact text message scams are reported to have overtaken email phishing scams as the leading source of fraud in 2021.

There are so many new messaging scams it's hard to track them all. But the top types are alerts about shopping sites (Amazon), payment sites (PayPal), delivery problems (USPS, FedEx, UPS), unauthorized purchases (Apple), compromised bank accounts, credit score alerts, prize or raffle wins, government benefits (SSN), IRS problems, and many more.

For example the [DMV Rebate Scam](#). Victim's got a text that read "DMV Office—Current license holders are receiving their \$2895 refund. Get your check by Apr. 17" followed by a link. Clicking that takes you to a fake site where you're asked for sensitive personal info. In this instance the website was located in China. That brings us to a helpful resource for checking out suspicious websites. [Scam-Dectector](#) is offering free use of their [Website Validator](#) to help consumers identify fake or dangerous websites. They've also published a list of the [current popular text message scams](#). If you get a text alert, slow down, don't click the link, and independently verify the message.

You can get more info and report text message scams on the [FTC website](#).

* Scam-Dectector, FTC, BBB