

How to Avoid Falling Victim to HVAC Scams

- Familiarize yourself with your HVAC system—knowledge is power.
- Get second opinions on repairs and sales quotes to ensure the first offer is not a scam.
- Be wary of high-pressure sales tactics.
- Insist on a written agreement—it is hard to dispute a verbal agreement if something goes wrong.
- If asked to sign an agreement on an electronic tablet or other device, pay close attention to the language contained before signing so that you know the specific terms, including whether the agreement is binding or just an estimate and whether it includes an application for financing.
- Carefully review quotes and ask for itemized receipts.
- Be skeptical of deals or quotes that are too good to be true.
- Know that a company asking for an upfront, cash payment is a big red flag.
- When considering third-party financing introduced by an HVAC company, communicate directly with the financing company before agreeing to use the HVAC company to perform work.

Report HVAC Scams

Floridians can report scams to the Florida Attorney General's Office by calling **1(866)9NO-SCAM** or visiting MyFloridaLegal.com. Complaints against contractors can also be filed with appropriate licensing authorities, including the Department of Business and Professional Regulation at MyFloridaLicense.com/DBPR/File-A-Complaint and the applicable county contractor licensing board.

Florida Attorney General's Office Scams at a Glance: Keep Your Cool

Visit MyFloridaLegal.com to find consumer tips or to file a complaint. By remaining vigilant and informed, savvy consumers can help us build a Stronger, Safer Florida.

Report fraud by calling
1-866-9-NO-SCAM
(1-866-966-7226)

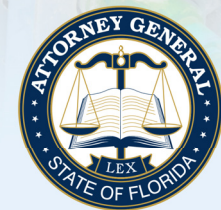
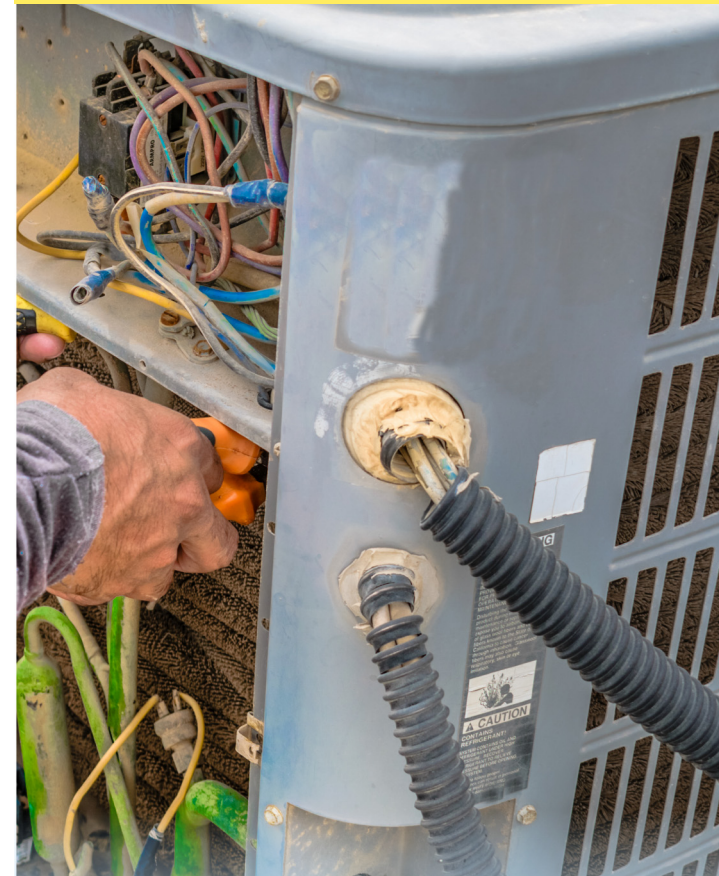
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resources at:

MyFloridaLegal.com/ScamsAtAGlance

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MyFloridaLegal.com

Scams at a Glance: *Keep Your Cool*



OFFICE OF THE
ATTORNEY GENERAL
STATE OF FLORIDA

Air conditioning revolutionized Florida and helped spur the rapid growth our state still enjoys today. Many, including our seniors, could not endure the hot Florida summer without this vital temperature lowering technology. When a Heating, Ventilating, Air Conditioning (HVAC) system breaks down, it is easy to understand why consumers are in a hurry to have it repaired. Sadly, some bad actors may take advantage of this urgent need for HVAC repairs to sell the unsuspecting customer unneeded parts or services. Floridians can use this guide to equip themselves with knowledge against deceptive business practices and fraud.



Types of Scams:

Replacing Functional Parts

Scammers will claim that HVAC parts need to be replaced when nothing is wrong—often quoting part replacement prices so high that the customer decides a new HVAC system is a better option. To avoid this deceptive practice, seek out multiple opinions and estimates.

Selling Unnecessary Amounts of Refrigerant

Refrigerant is sold by weight, so consumers should watch closely as a technician fills the unit. Some deceptive companies will trick consumers into buying more than is necessary to maintain a system. Consumers should ask the technician to weigh the refrigerant jug both before and after pouring to ensure excess is not charged.

Recharge Scam

AC does not need to be recharged—when a technician says that a refrigerant recharge is a solution to AC problems, it is a ploy to sell an unneeded service. Many times, the scam sets the stage for the consumer to call for another recharge at a later date, because the true problem with the unit was not addressed. If a technician tries to sell you a recharge service, report the scam and call another HVAC company.



Starting Work Too Soon

Dishonest HVAC technicians will often start to perform work before consumers understand or have agreed to terms of a contract. Sometimes one technician will distract the consumer while another technician removes or dismantles the AC unit. Watch what is being done by the technician before agreeing to have work performed. Florida law provides consumers the right to cancel an HVAC contract within three business days, unless the consumer waives the three-day period in writing.

Too Good to Be True Prices

If a technician offers repairs or quotes at incredibly low prices, or throws in “freebies,” consumers should be cautious. Companies could be cutting corners to deliver on the too-good-to-be-true prices, creating cause for further repair and expense. Unscrupulous companies also may use unsolicited phone offers or coupons for a low-cost inspection, test or duct cleaning to sell new duct work or expensive air purifying equipment that may not be needed. Get a second opinion to ensure you are only paying for necessary work.