



consumer tip

BBB Serving Central, Northern & Western Arizona
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BBB Tips to Avoid Scams Targeting Veterans

(Yuma, AZ – November 8, 2011) Veterans Day is a time to honor those who have served our country. Unfortunately it has also become a time to build awareness about scammers who take advantage of veterans and active duty military personnel. Better Business Bureau (BBB) wants to make sure those who serve do not become victims of fraud and encourages them to stay informed about the latest schemes in today's marketplace.

"While BBB issues a warning about veteran scams every year around this time, it is important to remember these scams target our military personnel all year long," said Matthew Fehling, BBB President/CEO. "One of the best ways to avoid these scams is to stay informed and use the many resources available through legitimate organizations."

BBB provides the following tips to help veterans and their families avoid becoming victims of fraud:

Look out for firms that target veterans and charge for products and services - such as military records, forms or benefits - which veterans can receive free or at a lower cost elsewhere. Information on how to qualify for veteran benefits can be obtained by contacting the Arizona Department of Veterans Services at www.azdvs.gov.

Be cautious of unknown callers saying they need to update credit card information or records with the Veterans Administration. Remember federal agencies do not contact veterans via e-mail or text, and if they do call, they don't request personal information.

Donate wisely and be wary of charitable appeals from unknown organizations referencing veterans or the Armed Forces. For more information on wise giving tips, visit www.give.org.

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Hang up on scammers calling themselves veteran advocates who try to convince veterans that they can get more benefits by transferring their investments into an irrevocable trust, which often contains unsuitable investments.

Be cautious of enticing military loans with flashy offers promising "up to 40 percent of your monthly take home pay," "guaranteed loans," "instant approval," "no credit check," or "all ranks approved." These offers often come with sky-high interest rates and hidden fees.

Watch out for low-priced vehicles posted on classified ad websites that advertise discounts for military personnel, or claim to be soldiers who need to sell fast because they've been deployed. Scammers often convince buyers to wire money and disappear once the money is received without delivering the vehicle to the buyer. Never wire money to unknown individuals.

Place an "active duty alert" on credit reports if you are an actively deployed military personnel to help minimize the risk of identity theft. With this alert, the Fair Credit Reporting Act requires creditors and businesses to verify identities before issuing or granting credit.

Veterans may report scams to BBB at www.bbb.org, the Federal Trade Commission at www.ftc.gov, or the Internet Crime Complaint Center at www.ic3.gov.

For the latest military consumer alerts and information, follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/militaryline and on Twitter at www.twitter.com/BBB_MilLine.

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For more information or to schedule an interview, contact Janet Torricellas at 928-919-7940 or by email at jtorricellas@arizonabbb.org.

About BBB Military Line

BBB offers our military personnel information and help. Since 2004, BBB Military Line has provided free resources to our military communities in the areas of financial literacy and consumer protection through the efforts of 112 BBBs across the U.S. Military personnel may access information at www.bbb.org/us/Military.

About BBB Serving Central, Northern & Western Arizona

BBB is an unbiased organization that sets and upholds high standards for fair and honest business behavior. Businesses that earn BBB accreditation contractually agree and adhere to the organization's high standards of ethical business behavior. Incorporated locally in 1938, today your BBB serves communities in Central, Northern and Western Arizona, supported by over 9,700 BBB Accredited Businesses. BBB provides objective advice, free BBB Business Reviews® and charity BBB Wise Giving Reports™, and educational information on topics affecting marketplace trust.