

CONSUMER FRAUD

About the FTC. The FTC works for the consumer to prevent fraudulent, deceptive and unfair business practices in the marketplace and to provide information to help consumers spot, stop and avoid them. The FTC enters Internet, telemarketing, identity theft, and other fraud-related complaints into Consumer Sentinel, a secure, online database available to hundreds of civil and criminal law enforcement agencies in the U.S. and abroad.

Military Sentinel. Military Sentinel is a joint initiative of the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the Department of Defense (DOD). Military Sentinel was created because consumer fraud issues impact quality of life, and quality of life affects military readiness.

Military Sentinel helps improve consumer protection for service members and DOD civilians through the centralized online collection of fraud complaints from the DOD and military communities. Consumer fraud and identity theft complaints entered via Military Sentinel are accessible to hundreds of law enforcement agencies through the Consumer Sentinel Network. Information from these complaints helps target law enforcement actions and consumer education initiatives and results in better protection for consumers in the DOD and military communities. Military Sentinel allows these complaints to be recorded by branch of service and installation. That gives DOD law enforcers and policymakers vital information to better protect service members and DOD civilians in the marketplace.

Complaints filed via Military Sentinel's secure online form are forwarded to the FTC for review. Fraud complaints are entered into the FTC's Consumer Information System, a central complaint repository. Identity theft complaints are entered into the Identity Theft Data Clearinghouse, the federal government's central database for this issue.

Military Sentinel helps military consumers avoid scams. Military Sentinel features brochures, pamphlets and special alerts on a wide variety of topics of consumer interest. With practical information on lending, credit, used car sales, and telemarketing scams just a click away, military consumers will find out how to spot, stop and avoid fraud.

Military Sentinel addresses the special needs of members of the military. Members of the military are consumers who face special challenges: nonstandard work schedules, prolonged absences from home, and frequent and unexpected relocation, to name a few. They may not have ready access to consumer information or the ability to file a complaint with local authorities. Military Sentinel allows them to forward complaints from anywhere in the world to a system created and maintained by the FTC—and to get information when they need it.

Military Sentinel is confidential, easy to use, and available 24 hours a day. Located at www.consumer.gov/military, Military Sentinel makes forwarding a complaint from the privacy of your home quick and easy.