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OFFICE OF THE
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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Avoid Puppy Scams on National Pet Day



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—On National Pet Day, Attorney General Ashley Moody is providing tips for Floridians to avoid falling for puppy scams. The [Better Business Bureau reports](#) that the average monetary losses to such schemes are rising, even as cases are on the decline. Attorney General Moody is urging consumers to be cautious when searching for a new furry friend.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “On National Pet Day, I am urging Floridians to be careful when searching for a new, four-legged family member. Scammers may try to take advantage of consumers when looking to purchase a puppy—I’m issuing tips and a new infographic designed to help future pet owners avoid falling for scams.”

Attorney General Moody lists important tips to help consumers avoid puppy scams:

- Meet the puppy before purchase to make sure it is in good living condition and does not have any obvious preexisting health issues;
- Be wary of online sales that seem too-good-to-be-true—they probably are;
- Reverse image search pictures of the animal to see if they are just stock photos;
- Know that a legitimate seller will never require payment by gift card, wire transfer service or cryptocurrency—use a credit card when possible for the added protections;
- Make sure that a pet store can provide proper paperwork, specify breeders and clearly list the transportation history of the puppy; and
- Carefully read the language of a contract.

Attorney General Moody is also releasing a new infographic that consumers can easily reference

when looking to buy a new pet:

National Pet Day
TIPS TO PROTECT FROM PET SCAMS

MEET BEFORE THE RECEIPT
Arrange a Visit
Never put a deposit down on an unseen puppy. Don't trust a buyer who refuses to allow visitation to the puppy before purchase.

BE WARY WHEN BUYING ONLINE
Flashy Words are Misleading
Online sellers may use deceptive buzzwords like designer or hypoallergenic. Double check these claims before buying. Also, reverse image search photos of an animal to see if stock photos are being used.

WHEN BUYING FROM A PET STORE
Watch Out for the Following:

- Stores without proper paperwork;
- Stores that don't specify breeders;
- Puppies transported from far away;
- Puppies that are much cheaper than the others; and
- Puppies less than 8 weeks old.

CAREFULLY READ THE PURCHASE AGREEMENT
Look for Tricky Language
Contract language can limit a buyer's power after purchase. This could potentially prevent recovery funds, via court, for any unexpected expenses. Also, know that legitimate sellers will not require payment via gift card, wire transfer or cryptocurrency.

FLORIDA'S PET LEMON LAW
Chapter 828.29, FL Statute

- You have 14 days after the sale of a puppy to have a veterinarian certify a puppy is unfit for purchase due to illness, disease or parasites.
- You have 1 year after purchase to have a veterinarian certify congenital or hereditary disorder.

Consumers can file complaints about pet-related scams or other types of fraud by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or by visiting MyFloridaLegal.com.

New pet owners should know that any canine offered for sale in Florida must have a Florida Official Certificate of Veterinary Inspection. For more information about the Florida Pet Law, enforced by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, click [here](#).

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The Florida Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division issues Consumer Alerts to inform Floridians of emerging scams, new methods used to commit fraud, increased reports of common

scams, or any other deceptive practice. Consumer Alerts are designed to notify Floridians about scams and available refunds in an effort to prevent financial losses or other harm caused by deceptive practices. Anyone encountering a scam should report the incident to the Florida Attorney General's Office by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or visiting MyFloridaLegal.com.