

# BBB Tip: Don't let travel scams ruin your trip... ...how to protect yourself before you book!

Submitted by **Kelvin H. Collins, President/CEO, Better Business Bureau**

Serving the Fall Line Corridor, Inc. • [BBB.org/central-georgia](http://BBB.org/central-georgia) • Office: 478.742.9034 (Direct)

**OFFICES:** Macon: 277 M.L. King Jr. Blvd, Ste 201, Macon, GA 31201 • Augusta: 119 Davis Road, Ste 3-B, Augusta, GA 30907 •

Columbus: 233 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Ste 911-B, Columbus, GA 31901

**P**lanning a vacation should be exciting, whether you're heading to the beach, taking a cruise, or booking a quick weekend getaway. Unfortunately, scammers know that travelers are often eager to lock in a "great deal," and they use that urgency to their advantage. Each year, thousands of consumers report losing money to travel-related scams involving fake listings, bogus travel agencies, and misleading offers.

The Better Business Bureau (BBB) urges travelers to slow down, do their research, and recognize the warning signs before making any payments.

One of the most common travel scams involves fake vacation rentals. Scammers copy photos and descriptions from legitimate listings and repost them at a lower price to attract attention. Once a traveler shows interest, the scammer pressures them to send a deposit quickly – often through wire transfer, gift card, or payment apps. After the payment is sent, the listing disappears, and so does the scammer.

Another frequent scheme involves deeply discounted travel packages. You might receive an unsolicited email, social media message, or even a phone call claiming you've "won" a vacation or qualified for an exclusive deal. These offers often sound too good to be true – and they usually are. Scammers may ask for upfront fees, taxes, or "processing costs," promising that the full trip will be delivered later. In reality, the trip either doesn't exist or comes with hidden restrictions that make it unusable.

Travelers should also be cautious when booking flights, hotels, or rental cars through unfamiliar third-party websites. Some fraudulent websites are designed to look nearly identical to legitimate booking platforms. They may even provide confirmation emails and receipts. However, when you arrive at your destination, you may discover that no reservation was ever made.

## To protect yourself, the BBB recommends taking a few simple but important precautions:

- First, research before you book. Look up the company on [BBB.org](http://BBB.org) to check its Business Profile, customer reviews, and complaint history. A quick search can help you identify whether others have reported issues or suspicious behavior.
- Second, be wary of deals that seem too good to be true. Deep discounts, especially during peak travel seasons, should raise a red flag. Scammers rely on urgency and excitement to push consumers into making quick decisions without verifying the details.
- Third, always book through reputable sources. Whenever possible, use well-known travel agencies, established booking platforms, or contact hotels and airlines directly. If you're considering a vacation rental, confirm the listing through multiple sources and communicate through official channels.
- Fourth, use a credit card when making travel purchases. Credit cards often provide additional protections and may allow you to dispute fraudulent charges. Avoid paying by wire transfers, prepaid debit cards, or gift cards, as these methods are difficult – if not impossible – to recover once the money is sent.
- Fifth, get everything in writing. Legitimate travel providers will give clear details about your reservation, including dates, cancellation policies, and total costs. Be cautious if a seller avoids providing documentation or pressures you to act quickly.
- Finally, trust your instincts. If something feels off – whether it's a rushed sales pitch, poor communication, or inconsistent information – it's better to walk away than risk losing your money.

Travel scams can turn a dream vacation into a costly adventure, but with a little extra caution, you can avoid becoming a victim. Taking time to verify before you book can save you stress, money, and disappointment down the road.

For more tips on avoiding scams and finding trustworthy businesses, visit [BBB.org](http://BBB.org).

\*\*\*\*\*

**Kelvin Collins is president & CEO of the Better Business Bureau serving the Fall Line Corridor, serving 77 counties in East Alabama, West Georgia, Southwest Georgia, Central Georgia, East Georgia, and Western South Carolina. This tips column is provided through the local BBB and the International Association of Better Business Bureaus (IABBB). The Better Business Bureau sets standards for ethical business behavior, monitors compliance and helps consumers identify trustworthy businesses. Questions or complaints about a specific company or charity should be referred directly to the BBB at Phone: 1-800-763-4222, Web site: [BBB.org](http://BBB.org) or E-mail: [info@centralgeorgia.bbb.org](mailto:info@centralgeorgia.bbb.org).**

**COLISEUM PARK**  
**PROFESSIONAL PHARMACY**  
380 Hospital Drive      Macon, GA 31217  
Across from the Emergency Room  
**BOB MOODY RPH.**  
Pharmacist, owner  
*Start Getting Better Now!!!*  
Phone: 478-745-5431      Fax: 478-765-4359  
**FREE PRESCRIPTION DELIVERY**

**St. Paul Apartments & Village**  
**62 & Older and Disabled Persons Welcome**  
1330 Forsyth Street • Macon, GA 31201  
**Call 478-745-0829**  
Rent Includes All Utilities • Beauty Shop  
Library • Optional Lunch 5 Days/Week  
Bus for Groceries & Doctor Appointments  
Range of Planned Activities  
Washer/Dryer On Each Floor  
Subsidized and market units.  
