

Travel Tips: Avoiding Timeshare Scams



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A timeshare can be a solid investment if you're planning to [travel](#) for vacation. Unfortunately, these days there seem to be more timeshare scams in the news. Whether you're renting, owning, or intending to buy, here are some [tips](#) from RedWeek.com that help you know what to expect and can help make these scams easy to avoid for a worry-free vacation.

If you are renting or buying, there

is less of a risk for timeshare scams because there is typically a membership or fee involved. But, you can still protect yourself in two ways:

1. Use a credible escrow service which can hold onto your money. It's highly recommended to use First American Title for both renting and buying. Using an escrow is the only real way to be sure your money will be returned if the week isn't what was agreed on.

2. Get any important expectations of your purchase in contract form. If the owner promises you a guaranteed view or amenity that you expect, make sure it is in the contract. Even with escrow, a dispute is not valid unless it is specifically detailed in the contract. Verbal promises, and even the ad itself are not sufficient.

Related Link: [Travel Tips: How to Make the Most of Time on Your Vacation](#)

If you are a timeshare owner:

The timeshare resale market is not an easy thing for sellers and that makes owners more vulnerable to scams – from companies claiming that they're able to take the timeshare that's become a burden off your hands. It's easier to relax because Feds are cracking down on these scams, but they are still out there.

These scammers often borrow the name of an established brand to convince you of their legitimacy. They claim to have a buyer for your timeshare, or to be able to easily find one. They ask for money either to cover closing costs or

advertising. Many actually go so far as to send you a check (which will later bounce), and ask you to mail the overage elsewhere.

Related Link: [Beware of Sweetheart Scammers This Valentine's Day](#)

There are four ways you can protect yourself:

1. Never agree to send any money to anyone without doing your research.
2. To research, do the following things:
 - Conduct a Google search on the company name and reviews, add the word “scam” – Often you will find others online who’ve shared their experience with the company even if there hasn’t been an official complaint filed yet.
 - Search the RedWeek.com forums – there are many examples of any company that should be avoided.
 - Search for the company’s name with the Better Business Bureau, and your attorney general’s office.
 - If the company looks legit, it’s essential to call or e-mail the company directly – do NOT use the number they gave you during the solicitation. This will guarantee you’re doing business with the actual company.
3. Never send money to anyone who sends you a check that is more than the purchase price.
4. Report any cases of fraud to RedWeek, as well as your state’s attorney general to help protect other owners.

There is always something that tries to ruin your well-deserved vacation days, but if you follow these tips it won’t be a timeshare scam. All that’s left now is to plan your getaway and some fun activities, and you’ll be relaxing in no time.

Do you have any tips to avoid vacation scams? Comment below!