

## What areas are covered by the Alameda County District Attorney's Office?

If the house affected by real estate fraud is located in one of these cities, or if you paid money to someone while in these cities, the Alameda County District Attorney's Office can take your complaint.

Alameda	Livermore
Albany	Newark
Berkeley	Oakland
Castro Valley	Piedmont
Cherryland	Pleasanton
Dublin	San Leandro
Emeryville	San Lorenzo
Fremont	Sunol
Hayward	Union City

\*\* Unincorporated areas of Alameda County are also covered.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

These other agencies may be helpful to you.

**California Department of Real Estate**  
(510) 622-2552 Fax: (510) 622-2540  
[www.dre.ca.gov](http://www.dre.ca.gov)

**California Attorney General**  
(916) 322-3360 or (800) 952-5225  
Fax: (916) 323-5341  
[www.ag.ca.gov](http://www.ag.ca.gov)

## ALAMEDA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE



## HOW DO I FILE A COMPLAINT?

- Drop by our office at Oakport Street
- Call for a complaint form:  
(510) 383-8600
- Print a complaint form online:  
[www.alcoda.org/consumer\\_protection/forms](http://www.alcoda.org/consumer_protection/forms)

\*\* Please note that due to the complexity of real estate fraud cases, we cannot take complaints over the phone.

Consumer & Environmental Protection Division  
Real Estate Fraud Unit  
7677 Oakport Street, Suite 650  
Oakland, CA 94621  
Phone: (510) 383-8600  
Fax: (510) 383-8615  
E-mail: [askcepd-da@acgov.org](mailto:askcepd-da@acgov.org)

# Protect Yourself

from

# REAL ESTATE FRAUD



## Tips & Resources for Homeowners

Alameda County  
District Attorney's Office  
Real Estate Fraud Unit  
Nancy E. O'Malley  
District Attorney

# Don't be a victim of real estate fraud!

# Take these simple steps to protect yourself.

*Check out the businesses and individuals you do business with. Five minutes of homework may save your house!*

## WHAT IS REAL ESTATE FRAUD?

Real estate fraud is any illegal activity affecting a home. It can include:

- Stealing your identity to purchase a house or apply for a home loan without your knowledge.
- Forging your signature on a deed or other document.
- Tricking you into paying money for services that do not help you or that you do not need.



## HOW CAN THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE HELP ME?

The District Attorney's Office handles any case where the house is located in Alameda County, or where you pay money to someone where the money changes hands in Alameda County.

Not all cases are criminal cases. In some cases, your case may be a civil matter. By law, we are not allowed to help with civil matters, but will assist you in getting referrals to other agencies.

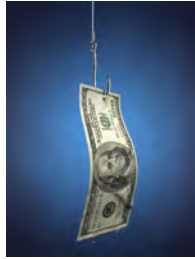
## SIMPLE TIPS TO AVOID REAL ESTATE FRAUD

- Never do business with people who you've never met face-to-face.
- Get a business card and keep it safe.
- Avoid letting people into your house to do a real estate deal.
- Do not go to coffee shops or restaurants to complete deals. Legitimate companies have real offices.
- Avoid doing business with strangers you meet on the Internet or at coffee shops, stores, or church who tell you they have a "great business deal" for you.
- Check the names of individuals and companies on the Internet to see if they have complaints against them — do your homework!
- Do not give out your social security number and other personal identifying information until you have thoroughly checked on the individual or company you are doing business with.



## SIMPLE TIPS TO AVOID REAL ESTATE FRAUD

- NEVER pay for real estate deals with cash. Pay with a check so that your payments can be traced if needed.
- If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!



## YOUR RIGHTS AS A HOMEOWNER

- California law gives you certain rights. Be sure to follow these simple laws that protect you from fraud.
- You are never required to pay money for a loan modification up front. Be suspicious of anyone who asks you to pay money before they perform all of their services for you.
- Read all documents before you sign them. Be suspicious of anyone who tells you to "just sign" the documents without reading them.
- Ask for and keep safe a copy of everything you sign.

