



FLORIDA CONSUMER NEWSLETTER

March 2025

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Agriculture and Consumer Services

NATIONAL WEIGHTS AND MEASURES WEEK

Even though states around the nation celebrate national Weights and Measures Week every year March 1-7, many do not realize there once was a time in the U.S. where each state had its own system for weighing and measuring consumer products. President John Adams signed the first federal Weights and Measures law on March 2, 1799, thereby bringing uniformity to how everything from produce to lumber and now even electrical vehicle charging is weighed or measured.

Many commercial transactions are based on weight, volume, length, or count of products bought and sold. Packaged goods are purchased at the supermarket, delicatessen items are weighed on price computing scales, scanners are used at checkout stands in retail stores to look up prices of products identified by bar codes, and fuel is purchased at pumps that calculate the price on a per gallon basis. As a Florida consumer, you can rest assured someone is watching out for you when it comes to making those purchases.

Inspectors with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) check the scales at grocery stores and perform net content inspections of packaged goods. Anything sold by weight is subject to inspection and review, and in 2024, FDACS inspectors conducted 166,935 package inspections. In addition, they conducted 182,198 price verification inspections at retailers to make sure that the shelf price matched the register price.

FDACS inspectors test fuel dispensers to make sure that you get a gallon of fuel when you purchase a gallon of fuel. They take fuel samples for testing in the department's petroleum labs to verify the quality of the fuel meets the manufacturer's requirements for your vehicle. FDACS scientists tested almost 68,000 samples last year in the department's two petroleum labs.

FDACS inspectors perform safety checks at large capacity propane storage plants and conduct safety and accuracy inspections on the trucks that deliver the gas to your home. They even check the cylinders you use for your gas grill, ensuring that not only are you safe but also that you are getting the amount of propane for which you paid.

When combined, the number of inspections of scales, fuel pumps, and propane devices exceeded 414,000 in 2024.

At the FDACS, providing excellent customer service and making a positive difference for Florida consumers is part of our culture. With the inspectors in the Division of Consumer Services monitoring the accuracy of Florida's gas pumps, scales, price scanners, and other commercial weighing and measuring devices, Florida consumers can be assured that the FDACS is doing everything possible to protect them and promote a fair and equitable marketplace.

The FDACS is the state's clearinghouse for consumer complaints, information and protection. When in doubt, consumers should contact the FDACS – all consumer complaints will be investigated. To file a consumer complaint, visit [FloridaConsumerHelp.com](https://www.FloridaConsumerHelp.com) and look for the [File a Complaint](#) option or call 1-800-HELP-FLA (435-7352) or 1-800-FL-AYUDA (352-9832).

www.FloridaConsumerHelp.com

1-800-HELP-FLA(435-7352) • Mon-Fri, 8a.m. – 5p.m., EST • 1-800-FL-AYUDA(352-9832)

NATIONAL SURVEYORS WEEK

National Surveyors Week is set aside every March to honor and celebrate the surveying profession and to educate the public on the role surveyors play in our daily lives. This year it will be observed March 16th through March 22nd.

One of the oldest known professions, surveying dates to Ancient Egypt. The oldest record of land ownership, the Egyptian Land Register, was created around 3,000 BC and records the owners and locations of various lands. Ancient Egyptian surveyors were well educated individuals and considered part of the upper class. They were involved in boundary definition, re-establishment of farm boundaries following floods of the Nile River, and large-scale building projects.

Greek and Roman surveyors were responsible for the straight angles and perfect lines that characterized the architecture of those civilizations. It was a surveyor, Captain James Cook, who first sailed into every ocean and surveyed lands from New Zealand to Hawaii. George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and Abraham Lincoln were all land surveyors before taking office as the President of the United States.

Modern day surveyors work on a wide variety of projects from planning and design of new or existing infrastructure, land, and building development and construction (buildings, roads, bridges, sports fields, farming, etc.) to archeological mapping and environmental measuring. Surveying tools have advanced from stretched ropes to technology such as GPS, 3D laser scanning, robotic survey instruments, and unmanned aerial systems (UAS).

As an individual, not every consumer may require the direct services of a surveyor during their lifetime, but everyone benefits from the services of a surveyor in some way. If you walk down the street, drive on a highway, take off or land at an airport, enjoy a boat ride on the lake, ride a train across the countryside, take your children to the neighborhood park, or ride/walk on a public trail that activity has been in some way facilitated by the work of a surveyor.

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The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services licenses and regulates professional surveyors and mappers in Florida through the Florida Board of Professional Surveyors and Mappers. The board ensures that surveyors in Florida meet the rigorous requirements for licensure and enforce the Standards of Practice defined in Florida statute and rule.

With over 2,500 licensed surveyors in Florida, chances are there is one near you. If you need the services of a Florida surveyor, visit the department's [License Lookup](#) page to find a licensed surveyor in your area. Consumers may file complaints against a surveyor or report unlicensed activity by visiting the department's [File a Complaint](#) page. Visit [Professional Surveyors and Mappers](#) for more information on surveyors in Florida.



TERMITE AWARENESS WEEK

Termite Awareness Week is March 9-15, 2025, and this article provides tips for choosing a pest control company, a termite or wood destroying organism (WDO) contract, and termite prevention measures to take around your home. [According to the United States Department of Agriculture \(USDA\)](#), termites cause billions of dollars of damage annually in the United States and in many cases the damage they cause goes undetected in areas behind walls, in the crawlspace, or in the attic. The Department recommends that you hire a licensed pest control company for termite protection in and around your home. You can find out if a company is licensed in Florida at: [Licensed Pest Control Company Search](#).

When you receive termite treatment or protection from a licensed pest control company you will be issued a WDO contract. There are three types of WDO contracts: spot or one-time treatment, retreat only, and retreat and repair. Every company will have its own contract that includes terms and conditions that could void the contract. Make sure to read the entire contract and fully understand it before signing. It is important to find out what termite species are covered, what structures on your property are included, and the duration of the coverage. In addition, you will want to find out what conducive conditions (or termite attracting conditions) could void your contract.



Even if you have hired a pest control company, you must also do your part to protect your home from termites. Here are a few simple tips:

- Reduce moisture on and around your home. Moisture is a conducive condition for termites and can include leaking exterior faucets and AC drain lines.
- Keep plant material and mulch away from your home foundation.
- Home siding material should not make direct contact with soil along foundation.
- Repair cracks and leaks around your home and roof.
- If you have a termite control treatment made to the soil around your home, avoid disturbing the treated soil along the foundation.

For more info and tips: <https://www.fdacs.gov/Consumer-Resources/Health-and-Safety/Protect-Your-Home-from-Pests/Termites>.



GENERAL SCAM PREVENTION TIPS



Scams come in all shapes, sizes, and levels of sophistication. However, they all share the common goal of identifying a victim's points of vulnerability and exploiting them to make money. Scammers are either trying to get directly to their victim's money, or they are after the victim's identity to set up fraudulent accounts. Either way, the victims are the ones who pay the price.

As consumers, we must be careful about the messages to which we respond and vigilant about protecting our personal information. Being informed and aware are our best defenses against scammers. Here are a few simple tips that can help consumers avoid becoming a victim:

- Be skeptical of any unsolicited personal contact, telephone calls, letters, emails, or social media messages.
- Do not use the telephone numbers, email addresses, or website addresses provided in an unsolicited contact to verify the validity of the information provided. Independently verify contact information through several sources before responding.
- Get details in writing before signing agreements, sending money, or giving financial information.
- Do not respond to high pressure tactics. Take the time to verify information and seek counsel from family, friends, or trusted professionals.
- Be wary of anyone requesting payment through money transfer, money order, or by sending cash or gift cards.
- Avoid using debit cards whenever possible. Purchases made by credit card will allow a consumer the ability to dispute charges.
- Check a company's license. If the business is regulated by FDACS, be sure to find out if they are registered at www.FloridaConsumerHelp.com under "Business License Lookup," or by calling 1-800-435-7352.
- Use "Check-A-Charity" at www.FloridaConsumerHelp.com or call 1-800-435-7352 to verify a charity's registration status and to check their financial information.

For additional information, visit www.FloridaConsumerHelp.com and select [Scams and Fraud](#).

ROMANCE SCAMS

By BCP Staff, FTC

Thinking of trying your luck with an online dating app, or getting to know someone you've met on social media? Before you do, make sure you know how to spot a romance scammer.

Here's a typical [romance scam](#): You meet someone on a site or app, and they want to move the conversation off the platform. You might talk or chat several times a day. But they can't meet up. They might say they live far away, maybe for work or because they're in the military. Eventually, they start asking for money — maybe for a plane ticket to visit you or emergency surgery. Or they might say they can help you invest your money in [cryptocurrency](#) or the stock market. It's all a scam to get your money.

Never send money or gifts to a love interest you haven't met in person. If you suspect a romance scam:

- **Talk to someone you trust.** Do your friends or family say they're concerned about your new love interest?
- **Search online for the type of job the person has plus the word "scammer."** Have other people posted similar stories?
- **Do a reverse image search of the person's profile picture.** Is it associated with another name or with details that don't match up?

Tell the FTC about romance scams at [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](#). Also notify the app or site where you met the scammer, too.

If you paid a scammer, your money might be gone already. No matter how you paid, it's always worth asking the company you used to send the money if there's a way to get it back. Read [What To Do if You Were Scammed](#) to learn more.



ABOUT THE FDACS DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES

FDACS is Florida's state consumer protection agency responsible for regulating charities and handling consumer complaints. FDACS handles more than 400,000 consumer complaints and inquiries, oversees more than 500,000 regulated devices, entities, and products like gas pumps and grocery scales, performs over 61,000 lab analyses on products like gasoline and brake fluid, performs nearly 9,000 fair ride inspections, and returned over \$2.8 million to consumers through mediations with businesses.



The Division of Food Safety monitors food from the point of manufacturing and distribution through wholesale and retail sales to ensure the public of safe, wholesome and properly represented food products.

CLICK THE ICON ABOVE TO SEE THE LATEST RECALLS, MARKET WITHDRAWALS, & SAFETY ALERTS.



The Consumer Product Safety Commission provides consumer product recall information as part of the agency's mission to protect consumers and families from hazardous products.

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The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is the state's clearinghouse for consumer complaints, protection and information. Consumers who would like information about filing a complaint against a business or who believe fraud has taken place can visit us online at [FloridaConsumerHelp.com](https://www.floridacconsumerhelp.com) or contact the department's consumer protection and information hotline by calling 1-800-HELP-FLA (435-7352) or 1-800-FL-AYUDA (352-9832) for Spanish speakers.