



DATCP and WDVA Celebrate Military Consumer Protection Month

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MADISON, Wis. – In 2023, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) received more than 192,000 reports of fraud, identity theft, and other consumer issues from active duty military personnel, retirees, veterans, reserve and National Guard forces, and family members. Whether they encounter scams or unfair business practices, current and former servicemembers and their families can count on the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) for help.

“July is Military Consumer Protection Month, and DATCP recognizes the unique circumstances faced by consumers who are serving, or previously served, in our armed forces,” said DATCP Secretary Randy Romanski. “Unfortunately, they are often targeted by scammers hoping to take advantage of their distinct culture, tight-knit community, and in the case of active duty servicemembers, their busy lives and distance from home. If you are a military consumer, know that DATCP is here and ready to protect you year-round.”

In 2023, more than one in three reports to the FTC from military consumers indicated they lost money to fraud. More than \$477 million in losses were reported in total, with \$350 million being taken from military retirees and veterans. With more than 42,000 reports, the top fraud category was imposter scams, followed by online shopping fraud with more than 13,000 reports. The third top category, investment related scams, received just under 4,000 reports – but those reports indicated the highest median losses of \$7,000.

“Servicemembers, veterans, and their families have already given so much to this nation; it is appalling to hear about bad actors targeting and taking advantage of them,” said Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary-designee James Bond. “I’m thankful to DATCP for recognizing this issue and providing resources to combat scams and fraud in our state. WDVA and our partners stand ready to help former servicemembers protect the benefits they’ve earned. If you need assistance, please know there are free resources available.”

Last year, there were more than 39,000 reports of identity theft, with active duty servicemembers being nearly three times more likely than the general public to report theft directly from their bank accounts. Rapid response is key to recovering from identity theft, making servicemembers more vulnerable if their duties prevent them from quickly identifying and addressing the problem. Consider setting up fraud alerts on your credit cards and a security freeze on your credit report, which alerts you as soon as a new account is requested in your name. Learn more from DATCP’s online [Identity Theft Tips](#) and [Imposter Scams](#) fact sheets.

For more information and consumer protection resources or to file a complaint, visit DATCP’s Consumer Protection webpage at ConsumerProtection.wi.gov or contact the Consumer Protection Hotline at (800) 422-7128 or DATCPHotline@wisconsin.gov.

If you need assistance with federal and state veteran benefits, [contact your County or Tribal Veteran Service Officer](#), who will guide you through the process. For state veteran benefit inquiries, call 1-800-WisVets, email WisVets@dva.wisconsin.gov, or visit wisvets.com.

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