



# CALL FOR ACTION THE CONSUMER ADVOCATE

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## CALL FOR ACTION 101

In this section of our newsletter, we will give you monthly updates on who Call for Action is and what it is that we do. We hope you enjoy this little glimpse inside of our world.

Did you know that your Madison Call for Action office is unique in many ways from all the other CFA affiliates? We think our differences help us work more effectively for the consumers that we serve - like you.

- The size of the geographical area where we service consumers. We are not just helping people in southwest Wisconsin but the entire State of Wisconsin. Plus, anyone living in Illinois or Minnesota.
- We were the only station (out of 24) that stayed open and working during COVID. Our loyal volunteers found ways we could continue to operate by working from home. During that time, we often heard from critical care workers who were struggling to get safety equipment (masks, gloves, etc.) they needed to do their jobs.
- In addition to initial training, we provide ongoing training for our Consumer Advocates. We have a monthly video meeting to keep up to date and twice a year we gather for a longer training day which typically includes speakers from various industries as well as State and Federal agencies.

- This monthly newsletter is used to educate consumers. Our newsletter can always be found online at [channel3000.com/call](https://www.channel3000.com/call) for action or you can request us to email it to you each month. It's free and you can opt out at any time.

Located in Madison at WISC-TV, CBS Channel 3 (Channel3000) and staffed by highly trained Consumer Advocates who are enthusiastic about educating and helping consumers. **Our phone lines are open to talk to one of us live on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday from 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM. Our phone number is (608) 270-2833.** Outside of those open phone hours you can call and leave a voicemail message or you can submit a consumer complaint online at <https://www.channel3000.com/call-for-action/>.

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Call for Action volunteer Mary has been on the team since November of 2023. Mary was born and raised in a small town in The Driftless area of Southwest Wisconsin. After graduating from UW La Crosse, she began her accounting career at a CPA firm in Madison. Auditing regional telephone companies was her initial out-of-college focus. Auditing fueled Mary's life-long investigative nature.

Mary's next career position was in a Financial Reporting role at a publicly traded telephone corporation. She was vital in enrolling the corporation into electronic SEC reporting. Eventually Mary was promoted to a managerial position at the corporate office in downtown Chicago.

After several years in Chicago, and having met her husband, Mary and her husband relocated to Lake Geneva to run a shipping and copy business together. The experience of owning and running a small business provided many important life lessons. Madison is her home now. Aside from Call for Action, Mary is heavily invested in genealogy. She also enjoys writing food reviews on Yelp and traveling.

## **MAILING ADDRESS**

**WISC-TV / Call for Action**  
**7025 Raymond Rd**  
**Madison, WI 53719**  
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## **CALL FOR ACTION CONSUMER ALERT**

### **USED CARS OFTEN SOLD WITH DANGEROUS DEFECTS**

How many of us have gone to buy a used car and taken the time to first check to see if the vehicle has had any safety recalls that were not addressed?

Often when we make the purchase at a dealership, we find the vehicle was safety inspected and shows a clean car history report. But those reports do not include open-recall information. Each year automakers in the U.S. recall millions of cars and light trucks due to unsafe effects. Sometimes these recalls are for minor items but many times the problems are dangerous: brakes that can fail, engines that catch fire, airbags that injure or kill, doors that might fling open unexpectedly, and more. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) about one-fourth of recalled rides go unrepaired. Many of those end up on used car lots where they are often resold by dealers that have not addressed the recalls or informed buyers about them. There is no law requiring them to!

Consumer advocates say it is long overdue for this to change, and for state and federal agencies and lawmakers to take action to protect motorists, passengers, and the public. Often up to 40% of automobiles had at least one problem subject to a recall that had not been addressed. Name another product that the retailer thinks it can sell you when it's under a recall. Dealers are in the business of selling cars, and they should make them safe. This is a treat to everybody.

So, what should you do to keep yourself safe? Anyone can easily check for an unrepaired recalled defect simply by entering the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) at the NHTSA (<https://www.nhtsa.gov/recalls>). If the vehicle you are buying is more than 15 years old, you will need to contact the manufacturer and ask if there are any open recalls for it. If you find a recall that has not been addressed, you should demand the seller resolve it before you finalize the deal and require them to provide documentation so you can verify the fix was made. If a seller refuses to resolve a recall, buy something else. Recalls can be addressed for free by taking affected vehicles to a franchised dealer that sells those makes.

## CALL FOR ACTION CONSUMER STORY

### THEFT BY CONTRACTOR COMPLAINT

Consumer contracted for a deck build and gave a down payment of \$50K. The contractor never completed the project and was unwilling to give any money back. Local authorities were reluctant to do anything as they believed this was civil case and not criminal.

The contractor is no stranger to the Consolidated Court Automation Programs (CCAP) (tax warrants, drugs, etc). The Dept of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) did investigate this case, but the contractor did not reply.

The Call for Action (CFA) Advocate contacted the Oneida county detectives and the Attorney General (AG) to comment. Social media shows that there are at least 5 other consumers that have been cheated by this contractor. The consumer filed a small claims complaint on 11/26/24. In January, the Oneida DA brought charges of Felony Theft by Contractor.

On 4/1/25 the client reported winning a court judgement and received a payment of \$25k, plus court costs. He thanked CFA and felt that our involvement was extremely helpful in the outcome. Once it went the small claims route CFA had to drop the case. However, the consumer was willing to provide CFA with the results.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Never give a contractor the full amount from a project quote. Most contractors require a percentage downpayment of the project so they can order materials and obtain the building permit. Depending on the total costs, that percentage should be less than 50%, with progress payments made at various completion stages. Final payment should not be made until consumer is satisfied with the project completion.

## CALL FOR ACTION CONSUMER STORY

### SHIPPING COMPANY COMPLAINT

Call for Action was contacted by a small business after a package they shipped was lost and their claim was denied.

The business had a shipping company pick up a shipment at their facility. The value of the package was well over \$50,000.00. They later learned that the package was not delivered and appeared to be lost. The business filed a claim that was denied because the shipping company was unable to verify if they had received the package.

Since COVID, some well-known shipping companies do not require drivers to scan packages upon pickup. Instead, packages are scanned first when they arrive at the shipping company facility. If a package gets lost before it is scanned the shipping company will not cover the claim because of not having a record of the package in their control.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Whenever possible our suggestion is for you to send packages by taking them to the shipping facility yourself rather than having the pickup at your location.

## CALL FOR ACTION CONSUMER CALENDAR

Here are consumer-related events coming in May:

**May 9, 2025** The Better Business Bureau (BBB) is marking the very first “**National Scam Survivor Day**” with the launch of a new online resource. Below is the link:

<https://www.bbb.org/article/news-releases/30297-bbb-marks-first-scam-survivor-day-by-launching-toolkit-with-amazon-and-capital-one>

**May 25, 2025** CFA speaking at the Middleton Senior Center.

## CALL FOR ACTION IN-HOUSE TRAINING

Twice each year the Madison Call for Action brings our volunteer Consumer Advocates together at the Channel 3 station for a training day. It is a fast paced training where we catch up with one another, learn more about Call for Action and the free, confidential, services we provide, talk to the General Manager, News Director and Consumer Reporter for WISC-TV, and meet with industry professionals, and members of various State and Federal agencies. We just completed our Spring 2025 Training Day. Guest speakers for this session included Lisa Schiller, Senior Director at the Wisconsin Better Business Bureau and Chrisbelly Antimo, Associate Director with Tenant Resource Center. Everyone left feeling like the information we learned can be put to use helping consumers. We are looking forward to what the Fall training will bring to us.

