



Top Ten Consumer Complaints Reported to DATCP in 2023

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MADISON, Wis. – As the state’s primary consumer protection agency, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) receives tens of thousands of requests for assistance and resources each year. In 2023, DATCP received and responded to more than 10,000 written consumer complaints, with mediation and enforcement settlements resulting in over \$3.3 million returned to Wisconsin consumers and deposited in the general school fund from civil forfeiture payments.

“DATCP staff do incredible work protecting Wisconsin consumers from concerns ranging from simple transaction disputes to scammers and identity thieves,” said DATCP Secretary Randy Romanski. “I want to thank the entire Consumer Protection team for their commitment to promoting a fair marketplace through conflict mediations, investigations, and their efforts to proactively educate consumers.”

DATCP’s top ten complaint categories in 2023 were:

1. Landlord-Tenant Issues

Landlord-tenant issues were the number one complaint filed with DATCP in 2023. Consumers filed 2,208 complaints when disputes between landlords and tenants could not be resolved between parties, a slight increase from the previous year. Common issues reported were security deposit returns, eviction, unauthorized entry, inadequate disclosures, and unsatisfactory service. Additionally, DATCP received more than 60,000 visits to landlord-tenant consumer resources found on its website, including the [Landlord–Tenant Guide](#).

2. Telemarketing

DATCP received 1,276 telemarketing complaints in 2023, a slight decrease from 2022. These complaints concerned robocalls, phishing and spoofing, imposter scams, and [Wisconsin Do Not Call Registry](#) issues. Last year, DATCP joined the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ), the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), and agencies from all other 49 states and the District of Columbia in the [Operation Stop Scam Calls](#) initiative to crack down on illegal telemarketing operations responsible for billions of unwanted calls to U.S. consumers. This resulted in a lawsuit against a company that allegedly sent or transmitted approximately 157 million calls to Wisconsin phone numbers on the National Do Not Call Registry.

3. Home Improvement

Home improvement concerns accounted for 867 complaints in 2023. The top issues consumers reported include failure to provide services and materials, failure to honor warranties, deceptive and misleading representations, poor quality of work, billing disputes and incorrect charges, improper installation, and failure to properly disclose lien waivers. DATCP contributed to the federal investigation into Tyler and Jennifer Hansen, who [pleaded guilty](#) in 2023 to multiple charges related to home improvement businesses they ran together which stole over \$800,000 from Wisconsin consumers.

4. Telecommunications

DATCP received 642 complaints regarding telecommunications services in 2023, down slightly from the previous year. Consumers reported issues including billing disputes, disconnections and terminations of service, deceptive and misleading representations, refund and adjustment policies, and failure to cancel services when requested. Consumers should

carefully read their contracts and policies to understand the extent and limitations of the services they are purchasing.

5. Identity Theft

With 459 complaints in 2023, reports of identity theft to DATCP decreased last year. Online account takeovers were the most common issue reported by consumers. To protect themselves against this risk and avoid the hassle of automated, sometimes unhelpful account recovery services, consumers are encouraged to create unique passwords and activate two-factor authentication for their important online accounts. Victims of identity theft should contact DATCP right away and keep in close communication with their DATCP consumer protection experts to recover and protect their identity against further fraud.

6. Medical Services

Complaints related to medical services decreased slightly from 2022, with consumers filing 380 complaints in 2023. The most common issues reported to DATCP include billing disputes, deceptive and misleading representations, and unsatisfactory service.

7. Motor Vehicle Repair

Returning to DATCP's top ten list with 352 complaints reported in 2023, the number of complaints in this category more than doubled compared to 2022. Consumers reported issues such as failure to perform requested repairs, delays in service, poor quality of work, deceptive and misleading advertisements, overcharging, and charges for work not performed.

8. Travel

This category covers a variety of issues including motor vehicle rentals, airlines, hotels/motels, and travel company service bundling. DATCP received 255 travel complaints in 2023. Billing disputes, refund and adjustment policies, failure to return deposits and payment, and unsatisfactory service were commonly reported by consumers.

9. Motor Vehicle Sales (New and Used)

The ninth most common consumer complaint in 2023 concerned sales of both new and used motor vehicles, about which DATCP received 233 complaints. The most common issues cited in these complaints were inadequate disclosures, deceptive and misleading representations, and violations of prize notice and direct-mail marketing laws.

10. Motor Vehicle Accessories

DATCP's tenth most common consumer complaint category of 2023, having received 185 complaints, was motor vehicle accessories. Common among these complaints were reports of deceptive and misleading advertising, refund and adjustment policies, defective products, and failure to deliver products.

For more information and consumer protection resources or to file a complaint, visit DATCP's Consumer Protection webpage at [ConsumerProtection.wi.gov](https://www.wisconsin.gov/consumerprotection). DATCP's Consumer Protection Hotline can be contacted at (800) 422-7128 or DATCPHotline@wisconsin.gov.

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Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

CONSUMER COMPLAINT STATISTICS

2023

<u>RANK IN 2023</u>	<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u># OF COMPLAINTS</u>
1	Landlord/Tenant	2,208
2	Telemarketing	1,276
3	Home Improvement	867
4	Telecommunications	642
5	Identity Theft	459
6	Medical Services	380
7	Motor Vehicle Repair	352
8	Travel	255
9	Motor Vehicle Sales	233
10	Motor Vehicle Accessories	185

Total number of Trade and Consumer Protection consumer complaints received in 2023:
10,882