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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

CA: Check For Odometer Fraud Before Purchasing a Vehicle



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody and the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles are advising consumers to check vehicle history before purchasing a car to guard against odometer fraud. The Consumer Alert comes as part of Attorney General Moody and FLHSMV's weeklong #SteerClearofFraudOAG campaign. Odometer fraud occurs when a scammer disconnects, resets or alters a vehicle's odometer to lower the mileage displayed on the dashboard. Lowering the mileage helps nefarious sellers profit off a vehicle for more than it is actually worth.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "Not only does odometer fraud trick drivers into paying a higher price for a less valuable vehicle, it can also prevent the driver from pursuing important maintenance and service work necessary to keep the vehicle safely running. If important mileage-based maintenance is not performed on an older vehicle, it can break down unexpectedly, potentially putting the driver and passengers in severe danger."

FLHSMV Executive Director Terry L. Rhodes said, "Odometer fraud is a deceptive and destructive practice which hurts Floridians on the road and in their pocketbook. FLHSMV is committed to ensuring Floridians know their rights and what to look for when purchasing a vehicle and encourages those who suspect or know of tampering with a vehicle's odometer to report it to law enforcement immediately."

It is illegal, both in Florida and nationwide, to tamper with vehicle odometers. Before purchasing a vehicle, consumers should verify a vehicle's odometer by:

- Looking for oil-change stickers, service records or warranty cards that may reflect the mileage of the vehicle;

- Using vehicle history report sites, such as AutoCheck, Carfax or Kelley Blue Book to make sure the car is in good condition;
- Asking to see the title or odometer statement received by the person selling the vehicle to find out the mileage at the time of purchase by the seller; and
- Examining the wear and tear on the vehicle. Look at pedals, tire wear, body paint, and other items to be sure the odometer reading is consistent with the state of the vehicle. If it seems too good to be true, it probably is.

FLHSMV provides useful information including the names of previous owners and vehicle histories. Consumers can submit a motor vehicle records request online by visiting the FLHSMV Motor Vehicle Information Check.

For more tips about odometer fraud and other types of automobile fraud, follow Attorney General Moody and FLHSMV's #SteerClearOfFraudOAG campaign online at Twitter.com/AGAshleyMoody and Twitter.com/FLHSMV.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that more than 450,000 vehicles are sold every year with misleading odometer readings. These crimes cost car buyers nationwide an estimated $1 billion annually.

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The Florida Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division issues Consumer Alerts to inform Floridians of emerging scams, new methods used to commit fraud, increased reports of common scams, or any other deceptive practice. Consumer Alerts are designed to notify Floridians about scams and available refunds in an effort to prevent financial losses or other harm caused by deceptive practices. Anyone encountering a scam should report the incident to the Florida Attorney General's Office by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or visiting MyFloridaLegal.com.