

Filing False Documents

Thieves may assume the identity of a property's true owner, or claim to represent the true owner, in order to fraudulently obtain title to the property. They then borrow against the property, or sell the property, stealing the equity. Criminals may also alter deeds before they are recorded, thereby changing ownership interests or amounts borrowed.

Mechanics Lien Fraud

A mechanic's lien is a security interest in the title to property for the benefit of those who have supplied labor or materials that improve the property but have not been paid for their services. Criminals usually record fraudulent mechanics liens without performing any work on the property to cloud the property title and attempt to receive payment. This may prevent transfer, sale or refinance of the property.

Are you a victim of Real Estate Fraud in El Dorado County?

If so, please fill out the Fraud Complaint form online at www.eldoradoda.com or call the Fraud Hotline: (866) 629-0171

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

California Bureau of Real Estate

Sacramento Office
1651 Exposition Blvd.
Sacramento, CA 95815
(877) 373-4542
www.dre.ca.gov

California Contractors State License Board

Sacramento Intake & Mediation Center
9821 Business Park Drive
Sacramento, CA 95827
(800) 321-CSLB (2572)
www.cslb.ca.gov

Adult Protective Services

(530) 642-4800 (24 hours)

Federal Bureau of Investigation

2001 Freedom Way
Roseville, CA 95678
(916) 746-7000

California Department of Justice

(916) 445-9555
www.oag.ca.gov

District Attorney
El Dorado County
778 Pacific Street
Placerville, CA 95814
(530) 621-6472
www.eldoradoda.com



Protect Yourself from **REAL ESTATE FRAUD**



Tips & Resources for Homeowners

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WHAT IS REAL ESTATE FRAUD?

Real estate fraud is any illegal activity affecting a home. It can include, but is not limited to:

- Stealing your identity to purchase a house or apply for a home loan without your knowledge.
- Forging your signature on a deed or other document.
- Tricking you into paying money for services that do not help you or that you do not need.

SIMPLE TIPS TO AVOID REAL ESTATE FRAUD

- Never sign any documents without reading them first. If you do not understand it, don't sign it.



- Ask questions. If the person can't provide straightforward and logical answers, then don't work with them.
- Do not pay up front fees. Foreclosure consultants are prohibited by law from collecting money before services are performed.

- Beware of foreclosure rescue scams! Don't transfer title to individuals offering this service.
- Don't ignore letters from your lender or loan servicer. Responding to those letters may save your home.



- Don't pay your mortgage payments to anyone other than your lender or loan servicer directly.
- Do not give out your social security number and other personal identifying information until you have thoroughly checked on the individual or company that is doing business with you.
- Never pay for real estate deals with cash. Pay with a check so that your payments can be traced if needed.
- **Remember, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!**

YOUR RIGHTS AS A HOMEOWNER

- California law gives you certain rights. Be sure to follow these simple laws that protect you from fraud.
- Check the person's license with the Bureau of Real Estate (BRE), the Contractors State License Board (CSLB), or the California Department of Justice (DOJ).

- Read all documents before you sign them. Be suspicious of anyone who tells you to "just sign" the documents without reading them.
- Ask for and keep a safe copy of everything you sign.

Examples of Real Estate Fraud crimes:

Foreclosure Rescue Scams

This fraud affects homeowners who have lost their income or have no equity in their home because of falling property values. The homeowners are desperate and must either sell their home at a large loss or let the lender foreclose.

A "foreclosure specialist" will offer to negotiate a loan modification with the lender on behalf of the homeowner. The contractor guarantees results for a flat fee. Often, the foreclosure specialist takes the fee and does nothing or little in return.

