

# Moak

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If the invoices were ignored or not paid promptly, the companies allegedly threatened to send the organizations to collections agencies. “Consumers who paid under a mistaken belief that they had to do so — some paid thousands of dollars more than what they were legally obligated to pay — often received more unordered merchandise and bills for payment,” the release noted.

In the Maryland case, the FTC charged six companies and three individuals around a scheme involving light bulbs and cleaning supplies. The scheme allegedly hired telemarketers who “falsely indicated that they had done business with the consumers earlier and that they were offering a free sample or catalog, without properly disclosing that they were making a sales call.”

The scheme allegedly relied on the fact the person ordering merchandise and the person processing invoices didn’t know what the other was doing. If invoices were paid, the company received future shipments of unordered merchandise.

This type of scheme is successful for several reasons. For one, many people believe unordered merchandise must be paid for (the law says that, in most cases, you don’t have to pay for anything you didn’t order). Secondly, scams use smooth-talking telemarketers, who trick people (on a recorded call) into answering “yes” to an unrelated question, doctoring the recording and using it as evidence the order was made. And finally, there is often a lack of good communication between those making purchases and those paying the invoices.

To read the complaint in its entirety, visit <http://bit.ly/2utdLhC>.

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