



## A Member Benefit

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# Online Booking Scams

New research shows the growing problem of rogue third party booking websites that trick consumers into thinking they are booking directly with the hotel. Some 15 million bookings a year are scams, translating to more than \$1.3 billion in money going to bad bookings.

What Guests Can Do?

### **BOOK DIRECT**

The safest way to ensure you get what you want and need is to book directly with the hotel's booking site.

### **CHECK BEFORE YOU CLICK**

Take an extra minute to make sure you're on the real hotel's booking site.

### **USE ONLY TRUSTED SITES**

Although the hotel name may be part of the URL, double check the website address to ensure it's not a third-party vendor stealing a hotel's identity.

### **CALL THE HOTEL DIRECTLY AND ASK QUESTIONS**

Ensure you protect your information, your reservation, your points and your credit card information. • What is the cancellation/trip change policy? • Is the site, in any way, affiliated with the hotel? • Is it a secure payment site? The URL should have a small lock and should start with https:// as opposed to just http://

You can help stop these rogue sites. Contact the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and your state's attorney general to file a complaint to make them aware.

Follow these steps to file your complaint with the FTC:

1. Go to [FTC.gov/complaint](https://www.ftc.gov/complaint)
2. Under the "Select a Category Below" on the left-hand column, click on "other"
3. On the right-hand side, click on "Click here for more options (page 1 of 2)"
4. Click "Travel, Vacations or Timeshares"
5. Click on "I initiated contact"
6. Click this complaint is concerning "Travel or vacation related services or packages"
7. Fill out Complaint Detail Information
8. Fill out Company Detail Information
9. Fill out Consumer Information
10. Type out your complaint explaining how you were scammed
11. Review your information and SUBMIT