



January 18, 2011

*****CONSUMER ALERT*****CONSUMER ALERT*****

ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN URGES FANS TO BEWARE OF BEARS PLAYOFF TICKET SCAMS ONLINE

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today warned fans purchasing Chicago Bears playoff tickets to take caution and properly investigate the ticket seller when making online payments. Madigan said ticket scams have surfaced during high-demand special events such as Sunday's Bears playoff game, when fans have purchased tickets online only to learn they paid hundreds or even thousands for fake tickets.

"Football fans need to be careful if they buy tickets online," Attorney General Madigan said. "Don't get so caught up in the excitement of the playoffs that you wind up the victim of a con artist cheating you out of a lot of money."

Madigan offered consumers the following tips regarding special-event ticket sales:

- If dealing with a ticket broker, determine whether the broker is a member of the National Association of Ticket Brokers (www.natb.org) and the Better Business Bureau (www.bbb.org). Both organizations have membership standards that promote ethical business conduct.
- If dealing with an Illinois ticket broker, consumers can contact the Illinois Secretary of State's Index Department in Springfield to ensure that the broker is properly registered. Illinois law requires ticket brokers meet certain requirements, including maintaining a toll-free telephone number and a consumer rebate fund.
- Avoid paying cash for tickets in person from a stranger as the tickets may be counterfeit. Consumers should deal only with a seller who accepts credit card payments or other secure payment methods. Consumers are urged not to buy tickets from an unsecured website. Consumers should also be wary of online escrow sites, especially those recommended by a seller. If an escrow site is suggested, the consumer should independently investigate whether the site is legitimate.
- When buying online, consumers should always note whether they are buying tickets at face value. Consumers also should familiarize themselves with the policies of the venue where the event is being held to determine whether the consumer must have actual ticket in hand, or whether the venue has a mechanism for paperless tickets to gain admission.
- Most importantly, consumers should never wire any payment to a seller for any reason. Buyers may be told that they will receive special-event tickets after wiring money to an unknown seller. In many of these instances, the consumer becomes a victim of fraud.

Madigan urged consumers affected by a ticket scam to file a complaint with her office by calling the Attorney General's Consumer Fraud Hotline:

Chicago 1-800-386-5438

Springfield 1-800-243-0618

Carbondale 1-800-243-0607

Consumers also can file a consumer complaint by downloading a complaint form at www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov.

Out-of-state consumers should report fraudulent occurrences to local authorities and their state attorney general's office.

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