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MADIGAN SUES CHICAGO COMPANY FOR MEXICO VEHICLE TRANSPORT SCAM

Attorney General Alleges Legalizauto Rey Scammed Consumers Seeking to Transport Vehicles to Mexico for Vacations & Extended Stays

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today filed a lawsuit against an unlicensed Chicago company for scamming over \$100,000 from consumers who sought to transport their vehicles to Mexico.

Madigan filed the lawsuit earlier today in Cook County Circuit Court against Legalizauto Rey LLC and its owners Oscar and Orfilda Flores, who are married. The company operates two locations at 3720 W. Fullerton Ave. in Chicago and 308 S. McLean Blvd. in Elgin. The company also previously operated as Issac Transport Corporation and Jacob's Transportation Inc.

Madigan alleged the defendants charged Illinois consumers as much as \$4,000 to legalize and transport their vehicles to Mexico but never delivered on their services.

"This company took thousands of dollars from consumers under a promise that they failed to fulfill," Madigan said. "Consumers who want to legally transport their vehicle to Mexico need to contact the Mexican Consulate in Chicago to receive accurate information and avoid falling victim to scam operations."

To enter Mexico with a personal vehicle, an owner needs to obtain a temporary import permit for it. There are three ways of applying for the permit – at the Mexican Consulate in Chicago at least six months prior to traveling, online at www.banjercito.com.mx, or from an authorized import/export agent, also known as an "agente aduanal." These import/export agents are required to be registered with the Mexican Treasury Department. Because the Mexican Treasury Department does not authorize agents to operate inside the U.S., legitimate import/export agents can only be found on the U.S.-Mexico border.

In addition, companies transporting, or arranging for the transportation of, vehicles across the United States must be registered with the Federal Motor Carrier Administration of the U.S.

Department of Transportation and must have a registration number that is referred to as an MC/MX/FF number.

Securing a permit at the border to transport a vehicle into Mexico can take up to seven days. Illegal operators lure consumers into working with them by falsely claiming to be able to obtain a permit and transport the vehicle more quickly.

Madigan alleges Legalizauto Rey took advantage of consumers seeking to legalize and transport their vehicles. The lawsuit states that the company promises customers that it can process all the necessary paperwork needed to legalize their vehicle for import into Mexico and transport it into the country by trailer by a specific date. However, the Defendants are not authorized import/export agents.

Consumers paid up to \$4,000 for the services of Legalizauto Rey. But in many cases, after consumers paid the company, their vehicles never arrived in Mexico and company representatives did not respond to customers' requests for information on the status of their vehicle. In some cases, when Legalizauto Rey delivered vehicles to the promised location, they were damaged or had excessive mileage.

Madigan's Consumer Fraud Bureau has received at least 37 complaints from consumers who reported losing a total of \$112,000 to the company's scam.

The lawsuit seeks to shut down Legalizauto Rey, provide restitution to affected consumers and assess penalties based on violations of the Illinois Consumer Fraud and Deceptive Business Practices Act.

For more information on legitimate import and export services, consumers can contact the Paisano Program (Programa Paisano) of the Consulate General of Mexico in Chicago at 312-491-8948 or visit its website at <http://consulmex.sre.gob.mx/chicago/>.

The lawsuit is being handled by Assistant Attorney General Cecilia Abundis for Madigan's Consumer Fraud Bureau. The Consulate General of Mexico in Chicago assisted in this investigation.

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