

# TIPS TO AVOID BAIL AGENT SCAMS

## Common Scams

### Unlicensed Activity

Bail agents are licensed by the California Department of Insurance. Always ask for a bail agent's license number and use the Department's website to ensure the agent is actively licensed.

### Illegal Solicitation

Bail bond solicitation is prohibited inside courts, jails, and police stations. Avoid bail agents who visit you in jail or the attorney room without your consent. Also avoid inmates who recommend or force you to use a certain bail bond agent as they may be receiving illegal kickbacks.

### Spoofing Websites

Some bail agents have created fake jail or government websites to illegally gain business. Always double check the URL of any website you are inputting defendant information into.



### Cold Calls

It is illegal for a bail agent to contact a family member or friend of an arrested person unless the arrested person has requested them to do so. Immediately hang-up if you receive one of these fraudulent calls.

### REMEMBER:

- Bail bond premiums are nonrefundable, even if charges are never filed or dropped.
- Bail agents cannot surrender defendants back into custody for nonpayment of premium.
- It is illegal to charge renewal premium.
- Bounty hunters are not licensed in California, but can apprehend a bail fugitive if they carry a certificate of completion of required education at all times in the course of performing his or her duties.

You can file a complaint with the California Department of Insurance. To file a complaint or to ask questions:

**Call: 1-800-927-4357**

**Email us at: [insurance.ca.gov](https://insurance.ca.gov)**

**(Click on Request for Assistance)**

For more information visit: [insurance.ca.gov/bailbonds](https://insurance.ca.gov/bailbonds)