



County of Fairfax, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 13, 2024

TO: Consumer Protection Commission

FROM: Rebecca L. Makely, Director
Department of Cable and Consumer Services

SUBJECT: Consumer Protection Commission Meeting for August 20, 2024

Please find attached the Consumer Protection Commission meeting packet. The next scheduled meeting is **Tuesday, August 20, 2024, at 7:30 p.m. in Conference Room 232** of the Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia.

Please RSVP with your attendance to Susan Jones by **COB on Monday, August 19, 2024**, at Susan.Jones@fairfaxcounty.gov or 703-324-5877.

cc: Amanda K. Kastl, Director, Consumer Services Division
Department of Cable and Consumer Services

Susan C. Jones, Branch Manager
Consumer Affairs Branch



**FAIRFAX COUNTY
CONSUMER PROTECTION COMMISSION
August 20, 2024 AGENDA**

Call to Order by the Chairperson (7:30 PM)

Remote Participation Motions

Minutes

- Approval of the draft July 16, 2024, meeting minutes

Report of the Director

Old Business

New Business

- FY 2024 CPC Annual Report

Commissioner Matters

Report of the Chairperson

General Interest

- Consumer Protection Commission Calendar
- Consumer Protection Commission Membership
- Consumer Affairs Statistics
- Community Outreach
- Consumer Resources

Minutes of the Fairfax County Consumer Protection Commission

July 16, 2024

7:30 p.m.
Government Center
12000 Government Center Parkway
Fairfax, VA 22035
Vice-Chairperson Gulakowski, presiding

Attendance:

Commissioners: Belkowitz, Gasimov,
Gulakowski, Kharat, Kirk, Rosier, Springer,
Svab

Absent:

Commissioners: Kratovil, Roark

Staff:

Rebecca L. Makely, Director
Cable and Consumer Services
Amanda K. Kastl, Division Director
Consumer Services Division
Carl Newcomb, Branch Manager
Regulation and Licensing Branch
Susan C. Jones, Branch Manager
Consumer Affairs Branch
Prescott Barbash, Consumer Specialist II
Consumer Affairs Branch
Christine Reedy, Consumer Specialist II
Consumer Affairs Branch
John Burton, Assistant County Attorney
Office of the County Attorney

Guest:

Appellant

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Vice-Chairperson Gulakowski.

New Business

Taxicab License Denial Appeal Hearing.

Vice-Chairperson Gulakowski called the hearing to order.

Vice-Chairperson Gulakowski reviewed the hearing procedures outlined in the [Consumer Protection Commission Special Procedures](#) and read the Statement of Commission Responsibility:

All hearings or other public proceedings conducted by the Commission in accordance with this Chapter shall be conducted in an informal manner. The Commission shall have the discretion to admit all evidence which may be of

probative value even if that evidence is not in accord with formal rules of legal practice and procedure. Applicants and appellants may appear, either by personal appearance, legal counsel, or other representation, to present argument and evidence on their behalf. In addition, the Commission may establish rules of procedure for the conduct of hearings which are consistent with law. Any interested party may record all public proceedings of any hearing in any manner which will not impede the orderly conduct of the hearing.

Vice-Chairperson Gulakowski provided the hearing introduction, and Division Director Kastl introduced staff present at the hearing.

Appellant provided their presentation, stating that he has been a taxicab driver for 20 years and that his license was denied due to misdemeanor charges for family violence. Appellant further stated he needed to work in order to support his large family and being a taxicab driver was a source of income.

No statements from other parties.

Director Makely provided the County presentation with information on the County's decision in June 2024 to deny a taxicab license to Appellant, to include:

- a timeline,
- appellant's taxicab driver's license application
- review of Fairfax County Code
- Director's investigation of the Appellant,
- Virginia Department of State Police Central Criminal Records Exchange Criminal Background, which included two guilty convictions for crimes of violence (MSDMNR 18.2-57.2 Assault & Battery-Family Member) in December 2023,
- Director's denial of appellant's taxicab driver's license application
- Appellant's request for appeal, and
- Staff recommendation.

Commissioners present asked questions in line with the Special Procedures. A discussion ensued on the specifics of the crime and the Appellant's prior criminal history, and the timeframe of the appellant taking medication as referenced in the Appellant's written response to the denial. Appellant provided responses to the questions from the Commissioners.

The Appellant provided a closing statement and asked the Commission to allow him to obtain a taxicab license to support his family.

Director Makely provided the County's closing statement, recommending that for the safety and protection of the riding public, that the Consumer Protection Commission affirm the decision of the Director.

Commissioner Belkowitz made the recommendation motion to affirm the Director's decision to deny Appellant's taxicab license. Commissioner Springer seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously 8-0-0.

Minutes

Commissioner Belkowitz moved to accept the June 18, 2024, minutes, without objection. The minutes were approved unanimously 8-0-0.

Report of the Director

Division Director Kastl reminded the Commission that the next meeting is scheduled for August 20, 2024, along with the Consumer Protection Commission Community Engagement Committee.

Consumer Specialist Reedy presented on social media engagement metrics.

Division Director Kastl discussed legislation requiring the re-adoption of the Remote Participation of Members Policy. Vice-Chairperson Gulakowski moved to re-adopt the Remote Participation of Members Policy, Commissioner Kirk seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously 8-0-0.

New Business

Director Kastl informed the Commission that the FY 2024 Annual CPC Report was being prepared by staff and would be provided to the Commission at the August 2024 meeting.

Consumer Specialist Barbash presented legislation pertaining to consumers and the Virginia Consumer Protection Act.

Branch Manager Newcomb presented legislative updates on trespass towing in Fairfax County.

Old Business

There was no old business before the Commission.

Commissioner Matters

Commissioner Kirk had no matters to bring before the Commission.

Commissioner Kharat had no matters to bring before the Commission.

Commissioner Rosier encouraged Commissioners to reach out to the member of the Board of Supervisor who appointed them to the Commission if their term was set to expire soon.

Commissioner Gasimov indicated that he had contacted the Clerk's Office on upcoming nominations to Boards, Authorities, and Commissions.

Commissioner Svab had no matters to bring before the Commission.

Commissioner Springer had no matters to bring before the Commission.

Commissioner Belkowitz announced his Commission term of 16-years expires on July 31, 2024. Commissioner Belkowitz stated that he has decided not to be re-appointed to the Commission but will remain active until the vacancy is filled.

Commissioner Gulakowski reminded the Commission to check their calendars for the next meeting in August.

Commissioner Kirk made the motion to adjourn the meeting without objection. The meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

CPC Calendar

Consumer Protection Commission

2024 Planning Calendar

August 20, 2024

January 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Election of Officers• 2024 Items of Interest• Committees' Resolution
February 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Authorization to Advertise A Public Hearing to be held on March 19, 2024, 7:30 p.m. on Proposed Amendments to Fairfax County Code Section 84.1-6-3, Rates, fares, and charges established.• Fraud Presentation by Fairfax County Police Department Financial Crime Unit
March 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communications Policy and Regulation Division Presentation
April 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Authorization to Advertise A Public Hearing to be held on May 21, 2024, 7:30 p.m. on Proposed Amendments to Fairfax County Code Section 84.1-6-3, Rates, fares, and charges established.
May 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public Hearing on Proposed Amendments to Fairfax County Code Section 84.1-6-3, Rates, fares, and charges established.
June 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Office of Public Affairs Presentation
July 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hacker License Appeal• FY 2024 CPC Annual Report• Legislative Update• Remote Participation Policy
August 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• FY 2024 CPC Annual Report
September 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•
October 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•
November 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nominations of Officers
December 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•

CPC Membership

Commissioners

Fairfax County Resident #1
Jacqueline Rosier (Secretary)
Appt. Expires 7/31/2025

Fairfax County Resident #2
Michael J. Roark
Appt. Expires 7/31/2026

Fairfax County Resident #3
Jason J. Kratovil (Chairperson)
Appt. Expires 7/31/2024

Fairfax County Resident #4
Dennis D. Kirk
Appt. Expires 7/31/2025

Fairfax County Resident #5
Vacant

Fairfax County Resident #6
Vacant

Fairfax County Resident #7
Pratik J. Kharat
Appt. Expires 7/31/2024

Fairfax County Resident #8
Harold G. Belkowitz
Appt. Expires 7/31/2024

Fairfax County Resident #9
Vacant

Fairfax County Resident #10
Josef Gasimov
Appt. Expires 7/31/2024

Fairfax County Resident #11
Paul Svab
Appt. Expires 7/31/2024

Fairfax County Resident #12
Denis Gulakowski (Vice-Chairperson)
Appt. Expires 7/31/ 2024

Fairfax County Resident #13
Maurice B. Springer
Appt. Expires 7/31/2024

Staff

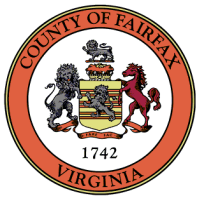
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Consumer Affairs Branch
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Susan.Jones@fairfaxcounty.gov

Main Number 703-222-8435, TTY 711
Fax Number 703-653-1310
consumer@fairfaxcounty.gov

Consumer Affairs Statistics



Department of Cable and Consumer Services
Consumer Affairs Branch
Monthly Summary Statistics

7/1/2024 Through 7/31/2024

	Current Month		Fiscal YR to Date	
Cases Received	92		92	
Cases Closed	68		68	
Resolved	54	79%	54	79%
Unresolved	3	4%	3	4%
Referred	2	3%	2	3%
Legal	0	0%	0	0%
Other	9	14%	9	14%
Advice Inquiries Closed	487		487	
Amount Reclaimed	\$72,504.44		\$72,504.44	

Top Complaint Types

Tenant-Landlord	47%
Automotive	9%
Internet Sales	9%
Retail Stores	9%
Communications Media	7%
Others	19%

Community Outreach

Outreach Event Calendar August 2024

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	# of Participants	Event Time	Staff
8/1/2024	Scam Presentation	Lockwood House 600 N. Madison Street Arlington, VA		2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	PNB
8/3/2024	2nd Annual Back To School Community Day Consumer Booth	Lorton Community Center 9520 Richmond Highway Lorton, VA		10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.	SCJ
8/6/2024	National Night Out	Hunters Woods Village Center 2304 Hunters Wood Plaza Reston, VA		12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.	MDP
8/15/2024	Back to School Night Consumer Booth	Springfield Estates Elementary 6200 Charles Goff Drive Springfield, VA		3:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.	SCJ
8/16/2024	Consumer Booth	Cedar Ridge Community Center 1601 Becontree Lane Reston, VA		4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.	SCJ
8/21/2024	Consumer Connection ScamCops	Fairfax County Consumer Affairs Facebook		11:00 a.m. - 11:20 a.m.	SCJ
8/28/2024	Tenant-Landlord Presentation	Rental Assistance Division 3700 Pender Drive Fairfax, VA		9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	SW

Outreach Event Calendar September 2024

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	# of Participants	Event Time	Staff
9/7/2024	Community Day 2024 Consumer Booth	Southgate Community Center 12125 Pinecrest Road Reston, VA		12:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	SW
9/10/2024	Lincolnia Health and Safety Day Consumer Booth	Lincolnia Senior Center 4710 N. Chamless Street Alexandria, VA		11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.	SCJ
9/16/2024	Consumer Connection	Fairfax County Consumer Affairs Facebook		11:00 a.m. 11:12 a.m.	SCJ
9/21/2024	Reston Multicultural Festival	Reston Town Center 11900 Market Street Reston, VA		11:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.	

Consumer Resources

Resource Items

Fairfax County Department of Cable and Consumer Services

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cableconsumer>

Fairfax County Consumer Affairs

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cableconsumer/csd/consumer>

Fairfax County Consumer Affairs Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/fairfaxcountyconsumer/>

***Consumer Connection:* Temporary Food Events and General Food Safety (July 9, 2024)**

<https://fb.watch/td2PBCSGnu/>

Information Items

Social Security Message- Real or Scam ([more](#))

How to avoid scams related to the latest immigration announcement ([more](#))

Crooks Steal Phone, SMS Records for Nearly All AT&T Customers ([more](#))

Social Security Message – Real or Scam?

By [Thiago Glieger](#) July 29, 2024 6:48 AM
Federal Employee Retirement

In a world filled with bad actors online, people have become conditioned to be suspicious of any emails that involve our personal information. That's why federal employees across America were put on guard earlier this month when they received an email from the Social Security Administration.

In a short email, the SSA instructed Americans to create a new login using a new system. It even included a helpful link. In nearly all cases, I'd argue that this is a suspicious email.

Real or Fake?

The Federal Trade Commission provides various details to look out for in emails attempting to scam you. The problem is that this SSA email checked nearly all the boxes with multiple "red flag" items:

- generic greeting
- requesting action
- provides a link

While this email seems like a scam, it is real. The SSA did send out an official blast email to online account holders of "My Social Security" instructing them that they must create an account with Login.gov if their SSA account was created prior to September 18, 2021.

They are phasing out the older usernames and passwords and Americans will no longer be able to access their online accounts without the new login.

Now What? Be On High Alert

If your agency hasn't already required that you create your Login.gov account, you should go ahead and do so. This will help make sure that you are up to date on your information.

Next, **be on high alert**. Scammers, phishers, and other bad actors will almost certainly seize the opportunity to get in front of Americans.

Now that you have been desensitized by this email, you are more willing to accept another email from the SSA (or other organizations) and not scrutinize it as carefully. This is exactly what fraudsters online are counting on.

Protecting Yourself

To help defend against potential problems, here are a few things to watch out for.

First, know how to spot fraudulent messages received. The Federal Trade Commission [offers guidance to help](#) with this.

Next, it may be helpful to know what real email looks like. You'll find a screenshot at the end of this column. There are helpful details to watch out for.

You want to see if the email comes from a legitimate ".gov" email address. Be careful not to confuse the email **address domain** with the email **account name**. The name of an email account can be customized to anything, so be watchful.

You should also be cautious of any phone calls received claiming to be from SSA, IRS, or any other agency. SSA and IRS representatives do not call you to ask about your information [except for in rare and specific cases](#).

While less common, I have heard of cases where fraudsters also attempt to impersonate OPM if they know the call recipient is/was a federal employee, so please be aware.

I also encourage you to take this opportunity to check your credit report. This is a recommended annual exercise to ensure your information isn't being used fraudulently. It's best practice to freeze your credit if you don't plan on applying for credit soon; just remember to unfreeze it if applying for loans or opening a new line of credit.

Remaining vigilant is the most important thing you can do. Take your time when reviewing (or listening) to information and take caution not to feel rushed into providing information. Fraudsters often rely on urgency, so make sure you always pause and do your research before moving forward with action.

How to avoid scams related to the latest immigration announcement

By Gema de las Heras

Consumer Education Specialist, FTC

July 29, 2024

There's lots of news lately about a new immigration process for spouses and stepchildren of U.S. citizens. If you've been paying attention, the scammers have too. They might call, email, or send text messages claiming to have special access. Or say they can help you apply now, for a fee of course. But those are lies. Here's how to find out if you'll be eligible and avoid immigration scams.

The first thing to know is that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) won't accept applications until **August 19, 2024**. Its webpage has the latest official information on eligibility and the process that might help some spouses and stepchildren of U.S. citizens apply for lawful permanent residence without leaving the country.

When changes like this happen, scammers take advantage by creating official-looking websites and inventing immigration programs that don't exist. To avoid these scams, learn to [detect the fakes](#) and:

- **Know there's no special or early access.** Only scammers will claim there is. Instead, get the latest updates at uscis.gov/KeepingFamiliesTogether.
- **Find qualified immigration help.** [Specialized lawyers](#) and [accredited representatives](#) are prepared and authorized to help people with immigration paperwork and advice. Don't go to unauthorized [immigration consultants or notarios](#) for immigration or legal help.
- **Never pay for forms or sign blank documents.** Official [immigration forms](#) are free. If someone tries to charge you for the forms or asks you to sign blank forms, you're dealing with a scammer.
- **Spread the word.** Even if this process doesn't apply to you, please share this information with people in immigrant communities.

Check out ftc.gov/languages for more advice in a dozen languages. Suspect an immigration scam? Tell the FTC at ReportFraud.ftc.gov — or in Spanish at ReporteFraude.ftc.gov. To report in other languages, call (877) 382-4357 and press 3 to speak to an interpreter in your preferred language.

A graphic featuring a stylized American flag in the top left corner. Below the flag are several overlapping white forms, the top one of which is titled "Application". The background is a solid blue color.

Spot immigration scams. _____

Only scammers
promise special or
early access to
immigration programs.



FEDERAL TRADE
COMMISSION

Crooks Steal Phone, SMS Records for Nearly All AT&T Customers

July 12, 2024- KrebsOnSecurity

AT&T Corp. disclosed today that a new data breach has exposed phone call and text message records for roughly 110 million people — nearly all of its customers. AT&T said it delayed disclosing the incident in response to “national security and public safety concerns,” noting that some of the records included data that could be used to determine where a call was made or text message sent. AT&T also acknowledged the customer records were exposed in a cloud database that was protected only by a username and password (no multi-factor authentication needed).



In a [regulatory filing](#) with the **U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission** today, AT&T said cyber intruders accessed an AT&T workspace on a third-party cloud platform in April, downloading files containing customer call and text interactions between May 1 and October 31, 2022, as well as on January 2, 2023.

The company said the stolen data includes records of calls and texts for mobile providers that resell AT&T's service, but that it does not include the content of calls or texts, Social Security numbers, dates of birth, or any other personally identifiable information. However, the company said a subset of stolen records included information about the location of cellular communications towers closest to the subscriber, data that could be

used to determine the approximate location of the customer device initiating or receiving those text messages or phone calls.

“While the data does not include customer names, there are often ways, using publicly available online tools, to find the name associated with a specific telephone number,” AT&T allowed.

AT&T’s said it learned of the breach on April 19, but delayed disclosing it at the request of federal investigators. The company’s SEC disclosure says at least one individual has been detained by the authorities in connection with the breach.

In a written statement shared with KrebsOnSecurity, the FBI confirmed that it asked AT&T to delay notifying affected customers.

“Shortly after identifying a potential breach to customer data and before making its materiality decision, AT&T contacted the FBI to report the incident,” the FBI statement reads. “In assessing the nature of the breach, all parties discussed a potential delay to public reporting under Item 1.05(c) of the SEC Rule, due to potential risks to national security and/or public safety. AT&T, FBI, and DOJ worked collaboratively through the first and second delay process, all while sharing key threat intelligence to bolster FBI investigative equities and to assist AT&T’s incident response work.”

[Techcrunch](#) quoted an AT&T spokesperson saying the customer data was stolen as a result of a still-unfolding data breach involving more than 160 customers of the cloud data provider **Snowflake**.

Earlier this year, malicious hackers figured out that many major companies have uploaded massive amounts of valuable and sensitive customer data to Snowflake servers, all the while protecting those Snowflake accounts with little more than a username and password.

[Wired reported](#) last month how the hackers behind the Snowflake data thefts purchased stolen Snowflake credentials from dark web services that sell access to usernames, passwords and authentication tokens that are siphoned by information-stealing malware. For its part, Snowflake says it now requires all new customers to use multi-factor authentication.

Other companies with millions of customer records stolen from Snowflake servers include **Advance Auto Parts, Allstate, Anheuser-Busch, Los Angeles Unified, Mitsubishi, Neiman Marcus, Pure Storage, Santander Bank, State Farm, and Ticketmaster**.

Earlier this year, AT&T [reset passwords for millions of customers](#) after the company [finally acknowledged a data breach from 2018](#) involving approximately 7.6 million current AT&T account holders and roughly 65.4 million former account holders.

Mark Burnett is an application security architect, consultant and author. Burnett said the only real use for the data stolen in the most recent AT&T breach is to know who is contacting whom and how many times.

“The most concerning thing to me about this AT&T breach of ALL customer call and text records is that this isn’t one of their main databases; it is metadata on who is contacting who,” Burnett [wrote](#) on Mastodon. “Which makes me wonder what would call logs without timestamps or names have been used for.”

It remains unclear why so many major corporations persist in the belief that it is somehow acceptable to store so much sensitive customer data with so few security protections. For example, Advance Auto Parts said the data exposed included full names, Social Security numbers, drivers licenses and government issued ID numbers on [2.3 million people](#) who were former employees or job applicants.

That may be because, apart from the class-action lawsuits that invariably ensue after these breaches, there is little holding companies accountable for sloppy security practices. AT&T told the SEC it does not believe this incident is likely to materially impact AT&T’s financial condition or results of operations. AT&T reported revenues of more than \$30 billion in its most recent quarter.