



# *Bethlehem Police Department*

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## CONSUMER ALERT

Attorney General Michael A. Delaney issued the following consumer alert to all New Hampshire property owners:

Consumers should be aware of mailings being sent to property owners throughout the state from companies using the names:

SECURED DOCUMENT SERVICES

DEED RETRIEVAL SERVICES

The mailings appear to be official government notices recommending, "that all United States [or New Hampshire homeowners obtain a copy of their current grant deed" and further indicate that, for a fee of \$86.00 or \$87.00, these companies will provide the property owner with a copy of their Grant Deed and a Property Profile.

The Attorney General advises that these companies are providing a service of questionable value and the information advertised in these solicitations can be obtained from any of the State's Registers of Deeds for significantly less money. With deeds so easily and inexpensively attainable, the existence of these companies depends greatly on the public's unfamiliarity with the county register of deeds offices.

Attorney General Delaney stated, "The real lesson for an educated consumer is to know what you are paying for, which in the case of these deed retrieval companies is virtually nothing more than a homeowner can acquire for far less cost. Don't be fooled by a company whose name sounds 'official' or by an 'official' looking notice designed to confuse and mislead you. If you would like a copy of your deed, you can obtain it yourself for nominal cost and time, or contact your county's Register of Deeds, who would be glad to assist you."

Under New Hampshire's Consumer Protection Act, N.H. RSA 358-A, it is unlawful for any person to use any unfair or deceptive act or practice in the conduct of any trade or commerce within this state. Anyone who feels they have been the victim of any unfair or deceptive act should call the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Bureau hotline at (603) 271-3641 or 1-888-468-4454. For more information on consumer fraud you can also visit the Bureau's website at <http://www.doj.nh.gov/consumer>