



BBB® Puppy Scam Study | 2022 Update

Pet scam reports to BBB Scam TrackerSM appear to be trending downward in 2022, ever since BBB issued an in-depth study **Puppy Scams: How Fake Online Pet Sellers Steal from Unsuspecting Pet Buyers** in Sept. 2017. As reports decline, however, average monetary losses are climbing with an average loss of \$850 in 2022, up 60% since 2017.

2022 reported losses expected to approach **\$2 million**

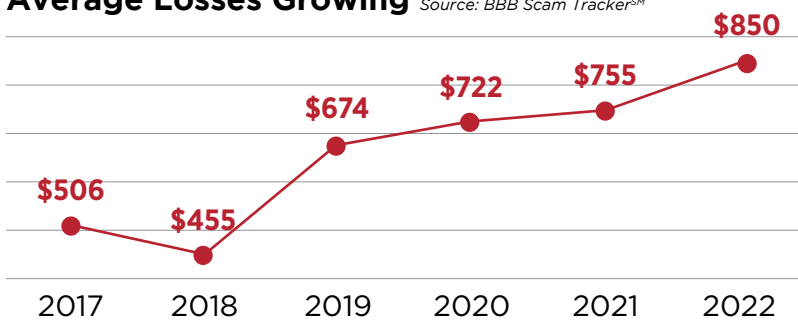
Source: BBB Scam TrackerSM

2019-2022 complaints and reports

	BBB Scam Tracker SM			Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre	
	Reports	Losses	Average Loss	Cases	Losses (Canadian dollars)
2017	884	\$448,123	\$506	277	\$221,718
2018	1,578	\$718,248	\$455	219	\$150,055
2019	1,605	\$1,081,942	\$674	208	\$188,103
2020	4,613	\$3,329,687	\$722	915	\$697,107
2021	3,979	\$3,004,433	\$755	508	\$701,526
2022 (Jan-Sep)	1,577	\$1,340,770	\$850	138	\$117,545

Average Losses Growing

Source: BBB Scam TrackerSM



Red Flags



Popular breeds, like French Bull-dogs, offered at a steep discount



Breeder refuses to video call with the animal



Hidden "shipping" or "insurance" costs



Reverse image search finds the same photo used on other websites

How the scam works

You:

- Find the perfect purebred puppy online at a great price.
- Answer lots of questions about yourself before learning the seller isn't nearby and needs to ship the dog to you.
- Have your credit card payment rejected, according to the breeder, who then offers to take cash-sharing apps like Zelle or Venmo.
- Pay for a puppy that never arrives because it never existed.

Scammers:

- Impersonate breeders or create convincing fake websites, using stolen photos
- Steal your credit card information to use or sell at a later time.
- Drag out delivery, sometimes saying the pet is stuck at the airport.
- Impersonate airlines or shipping companies, provide official-looking documents claiming the dog needs an expensive temperature-controlled crate or special insurance
- Continue to ask for more money until you catch on to the scam.
- Disappear.

How to avoid

- Do a reverse image search the pictures of the animal for sale
- Ask to do a video call with the pet and breeder if you can't meet them in person
- Don't believe "too good to be true" prices
- Consider adopting from a local animal shelter or buying from a nearby, reputable breeder
- Research pet sellers and BBB Accredited Businesses at BBB.org