

# The Review Guide

*A guide for leaving meaningful reviews that help others and effect reform.*

The ability to leave reviews for businesses has been one of the most powerful aspects of social media in helping consumers make decisions.

You may post a review and find that it's been taken down or that you can't see it for some reason. It's important to know how social media channels monitor reviews so that you can do it correctly.

1. Post one review. Don't try to game the review system by posting multiple reviews under various aliases or email accounts. Most sites have algorithms to protect against that. These systems ensure that spammers can't post numerous reviews and falsely weight the reviews for or against the company. This is a good thing EXCEPT – if you have more than one person using your device to post reviews (i.e., each of your family members wants to post a review using their email account, but you only have one computer) then typically only one of the reviews posted from that device will be displayed.  
Each review must come from a different device or network. To accomplish this, have each individual post their review from different devices (phones, laptops, library computers, etc) in order to assure the review is published on the site.
2. Post factual reviews. Avoid name-calling or false accusations. The power of a review is in the credibility of the reviewer. Just post the facts.

## What to do if your review is removed

In some cases (such as the Better Business Bureau), the recipient of your review may argue that you are not a client and thus have no right to leave a review.

We experienced this in our review of Senior Avenues which we posted on the Better Business Bureau. We were able to provide documentation that satisfied the BBB and resulted in our review being published.

1. In the case of guardianships, it is virtually impossible for “the client” to post a review, as they are incapacitated to some degree. However, as family members and loved ones, you can argue that you have an investment in the client. Also, under the requirement that only clients can post reviews, you can point out that any positive reviews on the site must also be taken down because they have not been posted by a client.
2. Provide documentation – we were able to provide emails and copies of the bounced checks that contributed to our dissatisfaction with Senior Avenues.
3. Never give up. Hold the site accountable. Be polite and respectful, and if you need to, escalate the issue. Guardianship is a bit of a different business and not everyone is familiar with how it works. You will need to explain it.

## Post to multiple sites

You can post your reviews and experiences to multiple sites. Different people use different sites to make their decisions. Some popular ones are Yelp, Google, Better Business Bureau, Caring.com. You will best serve the public by providing your review in the places where they'll access it.

## Have a purpose for your review

Your review is not a singular personal attack of the business owner. It is a way to help others make informed decisions. Your experience is important and should be shared.

Reviews are also helpful for reaching out to others who may have had the same experience as you, or who need assistance. We found through our reviews that we were able to connect with others who had similar experiences with Senior Avenues. First, it was helpful to know that we were not alone, but also it helped us to provide useful information in our testimony to the legislature and our continued efforts to protect others from guardianship abuse. We also were able to connect victims with legal, media, and political resources to assist them in dealing with their situation. Ultimately it's our hope that reviews are one piece of an overall puzzle to protect and inform others and effect reform.