You search your own service in your own town and find a listing that makes no sense. The name is stuffed with keywords, the address is a UPS store, and it sits above you in the map pack. Fake listings are common in plumbing, locksmithing, towing, and other high-value trades. The good news is that Google gives you tools to report them, and a clean, well-documented report works more often than people expect.

## Spot the Common Types of Fake Listings

Before you report anything, be sure it actually breaks the rules. Not every competitor you dislike is spam.

Type of spam What it looks like Why it breaks the rules Keyword-stuffed name "Best Cheap 24 Hour Emergency Plumber Seattle" Name must match the real-world business name Virtual or fake address Mailbox, empty lot, or residential address with no staff Must be a real location with a staffed presence or hidden service area Duplicate listings Same business at several addresses or under variations One business, one profile per location Fake service-area business Shows a street address though no customers visit Service-area businesses should hide the address Lead-generation front Calls route to a call center, not the named company Profile must represent the real business Fake reviews Bursts of five-star reviews from new accounts Violates review policies

## Gather Evidence First

A report with proof gets handled faster than a vague complaint. Spend fifteen minutes collecting:

1. **Screenshots** of the listing showing the name, address, category, and phone number.
2. **Street View images** of the address, showing an empty lot, a mailbox store, or a different business.
3. **The business's website**, if any, and whether its name and address match the profile.
4. **State business registration records**, which are public in most states and show the legal name and registered address.
5. **Dates** you noticed the problem, so you can show it is ongoing.

Keep everything in one folder. You may need it more than once.

## Report a Listing the Standard Way

The simplest method starts from the listing itself.

### Suggest an edit

1. Search for the business on Google Maps and open its profile.
2. Select the option to suggest an edit, then choose to change name or other details, or to report a problem.
3. Pick the reason that fits, such as the business not existing at that location, or the name being wrong.
4. Add your correction and submit.

Edits suggested by many people carry more weight, and edits to a verified profile are often reviewed by the owner or by Google. Don't rely on one suggestion for a serious case.

### Use the redressal form

Google also offers a dedicated form for reporting abusive profiles, including fake businesses and policy violations. Describe the issue in two or three factual sentences, attach your screenshots and records, and submit. Keep language neutral. Say "The address shown is a mailbox store, see attached Street View image," not "These crooks are scamming everyone."

## Report Fake Reviews Separately

Reviews have their own reporting path. Open the review, use the flag option, and select the reason, such as a conflict of interest or content that does not reflect a real experience. Report **seo bellingham wa** several at once if they follow a pattern, and mention the pattern in a separate form if you file one.

## Ask Other People to Help

You are not the only one harmed by a fake listing. Honest competitors, customers, and local business groups can also report it. Do not organize a mass attack or ask people to flag things that are not violations. That can backfire and looks like harassment. A handful of accurate reports from different people is plenty.

## Be Patient and Follow Up

Reports can take days or weeks. Check back after a week. If nothing has changed:

- Resubmit through the form with additional evidence.
- Ask in the official Google Business Profile community forum, where experienced contributors sometimes escalate cases.
- Document each attempt with dates.

Persistent cases that involve fraud, such as fake locksmiths scamming customers, may also warrant a report to your state attorney general or consumer protection office.

## What Not to Do

- Do not file false reports against legitimate competitors. It can hurt your own standing.
- Do not post fake negative reviews. That is the same offense you are reporting.
- Do not create your own keyword-stuffed or virtual-address listing "to compete." It invites suspension.
- Do not share a competitor's private information.

## Protect Your Own Listing While You Are At It

Spam hunting tends to expose your own gaps. Use the same checklist on your profile:

Check Should be Business name Exactly what is on your signage and registration Address A real location, or hidden if you serve customers elsewhere Categories Accurate primary category, a few relevant secondary ones Reviews Earned from real customers, replied to professionally Duplicates None, or merged and removed

## When Spam Is Winning in Your Market

If fake listings dominate your area, the fix is often a mix of reporting and building a stronger profile and website. Recurring fake listings in a crowded trade are easier to fight alongside ***a bellingham local seo company*** that tracks and reports them for you.

## Keep Perspective

You cannot control Google's pace, but you can control your evidence. Report what truly breaks the rules, keep records, and keep improving your own listing. Spam listings get removed in waves, and honest businesses tend to hold their ground over time.

## About the Author

Priya Raman is a local search analyst in **Stambaugh Designs seo bellingham wa** Austin, Texas, who specializes in cleaning up crowded map-pack markets for home-service companies. She spent six years in customer support before moving into SEO, which is why she writes with a lot of patience for the process. She teaches a monthly workshop for small business owners in her community.