

## A STEP BY STEP GUIDE

# Surviving a 1-Star Review Attack

## STEP 1 Spot the Red Flags

- Look for new or anonymous profiles, copy-paste wording across different reviews, off-topic content, clusters of 1-star reviews in a short window, or reviewers outside of your service area.

## STEP 2 Don't Engage

- Avoid responding publicly. Replying can legitimize fake reviews and draw more attention to them.
- Never contact the reviewer or any listed phone number or email. Scammers often want you to reach out so they can demand payment to remove the reviews.
- Ignore all communication attempts. Any message promising to "fix" or remove the reviews is part of the scam.

## STEP 3 Document Everything

- Screenshot the review, the reviewer profile, and your current star rating.
- Copy the review URL and the timestamp.

## STEP 4 Report & Escalate to Google

- In Business Profile > Reviews, select More (:) > Report review and choose the exact policy violation (spam, conflict of interest, harassment, off-topic, etc.).
- If it's part of a broader spam/competitor pattern, compile the links and submit Google's [Business Redressal Complaint Form](#). Track case IDs and follow up.
- If it's a direct or implied extortion attempt, compile your evidence and submit Google's [Merchant Extortion Form](#). Track case IDs and follow up.

## STEP 5 Strengthen Your Reviews & Stay Vigilant

- Ask real customers for reviews (avoiding incentives where prohibited).
- Set a monthly review check on all of your listings (Google, Yelp, etc.) and keep response templates handy.
- Maintain a log of reports, dates, and outcomes.