



OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

COUNTY OF SHASTA

Gerald C. Benito
District Attorney

Robert J. Maloney
Assistant District Attorney

PRESS RELEASE
CRAIG'S LIST SCAM WARNINGS

10/26/09

The District Attorney's Office Consumer Protection Unit is warning consumers that even using reputable internet sites, can make you a victim of a scam. Craigslist is a great service but if you deal with people you aren't meeting face to face you risk getting scammed.

Craigslist is a great resource for selling things, finding apartments, locating services and social networking. Most of the time transactions go smoothly and with no complaints from either seller or buyer and there is a satisfying Craigslist experience.

However, for others, danger awaits. Most Craigslist scams can be found on other online auction sites such as Ebay etc.... Posting an item such as a piece of jewelry or some other easily-mailed valuable item will almost certainly lead to contact by a scammer. Generally, the scammer will offer you more than your selling price. When this happens, you should be wary. To some this may seem obvious, but the scammers can be very clever in their approach and have many different stories designed to fool people.

APARTMENT scam: Suspect advertises an apartment or home for rent in your area and is offered at a very low price. The posting may even have a photo attached to it. The listing has an email address attached to which any interested individuals can use for any inquiries you have on the home/apartment. The suspect waits for someone to inquire about the home and tells anyone interested in the home that he/they are out of the country and are unable to show the home/apartment but they will take a deposit from you since the rent is such a good deal. The victim will be asked to send/wire the suspect money and it is often sent overseas. In reality, there is no apartment or home.

EMPLOYMENT scam: Suspect contacts individuals looking for work and offers them a job. The suspect/perspective employer claims to represent a company which does business globally. The employer asks you, the new employee, to receive checks from many different areas, cash them, keep a percentage of the checks as your wages, and forward the remainder to a contact out of the country. The employer asks that the money be sent via Western Union or MoneyGram.

Be careful and don't add your name to the growing list of internet fraud victims. When in doubt, ask an internet savvy friend what they think. Once you know the common themes these criminals employ it is easy to spot them and they will become little more than an irritation.

Follow these simple tips and you will reduce the chance that you will be scammed.

1. Conduct any business with people from your own local area.
2. Do not do business with individuals who claim to live far away. Many scammers are actually from foreign countries. This can be obvious by the very poor use of English and English grammar. This is not a definitive indication of a scam but it is definitely a red flag.
3. Do not send money to distant purchasers.
4. Do not cash checks sent to you by distant buyers especially if you are asked to send money back to them using Western Union, money order, money gram etc.
5. Never release personal information to anyone.
6. If you cash a check, money order, money gram, etc.... be sure to wait a period long enough to make sure the check is not a fraud before spending the money you received. (This may be several weeks)
7. Beware of anyone offering more money than what you are asking for your item.
8. If a deal seems to be too good to be true, it probably is.
9. Read Craigslist's Tips on How to Avoid Fraud on Craigslist web site.

For questions, contact District Attorney Jerry Benito at 245-6310. To report a scam, call D.A. Investigator Joe Hendrix at 530-245-6395, or email at consumerfraud@co.shasta.ca.us.