
somd.com Customer Support Center

Important Bulletin about Internet SCAMS!

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Sadly, there are scammers who target advertisers in on-line classifieds. Even more sad is the fact that there are people who fall for the scams despite all of the warnings.

One common type of scam typically boils down to them sending you a bogus check or money order for more than the purchase amount of what you are selling and asking you to wire back (Western Union) the difference. The reasons for sending you more money than you are asking vary and change over time. The other clue is that, for one reason or another, they are not local. Therefore, getting your stuff to them, or their stuff to you, involves shipping it.

Fortunately, most people have enough common sense to realize that no one is going to send a complete stranger a cashier's check or money order for hundreds or thousands of dollars more than they are asking.

The few that do fall for the scam usually say that they did not realize that counterfeit money orders or cashier's checks existed. They also felt confident once the bank accepted the funds into their personal account.

Fake cashier's checks and money order are very common today. Even bogus USPS money orders are being circulated. Banks usually can't tell that something is fake until it comes back from the payer bank as non-payable. This process can take several days. When it does come back, the bank will want their money back from you.

Another common scam involves advertising expensive pets for free or a bargain basement price. The scammer will tell you that they live outside the area and they will ship the animal to you after you wire them money for the airline shipping cost and other associated fees. If you believe that someone would have a problem getting rid of an expensive pedigree animal in their own locality and would subsequently have to resort to advertising the animal at bargain basement prices on the internet, then by all means wire them your money.

Other scams involve responding to ads looking for roommates or offering to rent your home or apartment. The methodology of the scams vary, but in the end, they always want you to wire them money, e.g. maybe they are short cash and need some money to get into town to become your roommate. You, being desperate for someone to share the rent, fall for it.

Why don't the police arrest these scammers? The scammers typically operate outside of the US. Even if the police had an interest in investigating, they lack the jurisdiction to do anything. We do believe they hire unsuspecting people to post their ads. If you respond to an "employment" ad to post ads on the internet, there's a good chance that you would be party to a conspiracy to commit fraud.

COMMON SENSE RULES FOR BUYING & SELLING ONLINE:

NEVER WIRE FUNDS TO ANYONE FOR ANY REASON!

DO NOT DEAL WITH ANYONE WHO DOES NOT LIVE IN THE LOCAL AREA! Our classifieds are intended for local citizens. It is best to only deal with local people who you can meet face-to-face and can provide cash for payment (where applicable). You can have more confidence in advertisers who use local ISPs for their email, such as COMCAST.NET, METROCAST.NET, and VERIZON.NET. However, this is not a 100% guarantee that they are legitimate. Do not respond to ads that list an address that is not local -- examine the city, state, and zip code to see if they even make any sense.

NEVER INVOLVE YOURSELF WITH A DEAL THAT INVOLVES SHIPPING! Someone who responds to local classified ads and has to ship you his stuff, or needs you to ship him your stuff is a SCAMMER. See above.

LEGITIMATE PEOPLE DO NOT SEND STRANGERS CHECKS OR MONEY ORDER FOR MORE THAN THE ITEM THEY ARE BUYING! Would you send a complete stranger a money order for hundreds of dollars more than what the item you are buying costs? Of course not! Need we say more?

CASHIERS CHECKS AND MONEY ORDERS CAN BE FAKE. If you don't believe anything we've said up until this point and you just have to do business this way, allow several days for the financial

instrument you deposited into your bank account to clear before you run down to the shipping store. If it comes back as bogus, the bank is going to take their money back from you and maybe charge you a few extra dollars for their trouble.

REPORT SUSPECTED SCAMMERS SO WE CAN REMOVE THE ADS

Our moderators are constantly monitoring all incoming ads. If we missed a suspected scam, or have not yet attended to it, please use the "Alert Admin" link that appears on the detail page of each classified ad. This will bring it to the immediate attention of our moderators.

REPORT SUSPECTED SCAMMERS TO THEIR EMAIL PROVIDER

If you responded to an ad and received a reply from the advertiser that you are convinced is a scam, please take a few moments to report it to their email provider. If the provider agrees that they are a scammer, they will disable the scammer's account, in turn disrupting any communications with potential victims.

Just forward the message you received intact to the abuse address of the email provider. For example, if the scammer is using Yahoo Mail, forward their email, **ALONG WITH THE FULL EMAIL HEADERS**, to abuse (at) yahoo.com. All major providers have an abuse address. Be sure to note at the top of the message that the person you are reporting is a **ONLINE CLASSIFIEDS SCAMMER**.

Also, be sure to include the **FULL EMAIL HEADERS** when you forward the message to the abuse address. Without the full headers, there is usually nothing they will do to address the problem, since the scammer's address could be spoofed.