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SCAM ALERT!



A Consumer Update from Mat Heck, Jr., Prosecuting Attorney



MAT HECK, Jr.
Montgomery County Prosecutor

"Don't get scammed when buying online."

PAY ATTENTION TO WHO YOU ARE PURCHASING FROM ONLINE

With the increase of online purchasing, fraud rings have started targeting those who make internet purchases. A recent Secret Service investigation uncovered an organized fraud ring that stole over \$30,000,000 through the use of an online auction site. Internet purchasers need to make sure they are aware of who they are dealing with when making electronic transactions.



WHAT CONSUMERS NEED TO LOOK FOR:

- Investigate the seller. Examine the feedback and the seller's history. Google the seller's name, email address, and phone number, looking for differences in information they provided;
- Be suspicious of sellers using multiple email accounts or phone numbers to communicate;
- If the price seems too good to be true, it's probably a scam;
- Use your credit card instead of a debit card to make it easier to dispute fake transactions;
- Never complete a purchase outside of the auction site. Criminals encourage the buyer to complete the transaction "offline" to avoid fees. Completing a purchase offline offers none of the fraud protections that exist when using a traditional credit card;
- Never agree to wire funds or use a gift card to pay;
- If you do use a gift card for payment, NEVER photograph the gift card and send to the seller "as proof" of payment;
- Ask the seller when delivery can be expected and obtain tracking numbers for shipments;
- Never provide your social security number or any other personally identifiable information to the seller;
- If you are cheated, notify the police immediately.

IN THE EVENT YOU THINK YOU ARE BEING SCAMMED:

Call the Montgomery County Prosecutor's Office Consumer Fraud Division at 937-225-4747.

The above ALERT is part of the Montgomery County Prosecuting Attorney's initiative to help citizens become aware of ways they can avoid becoming a victim, or ways they can help stop criminal activity that may be occurring. Upon request, the office can provide presentations on crime prevention actions and activities to halt crime and increase the quality of life in our community.

If you would like additional information on the above ALERT, or would like additional information regarding our programs to assist consumers in general and/or seniors in particular, please contact Kimberly Melnick, Supervising Attorney, Adult Protection Unit, or Anthony Schoen, Supervising Attorney, Fraud and Economic Crimes Unit at 937-225-5757.

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