



UCLA PD CRIME ALERT

June 2, 2009

SCAM ARTISTS TARGET STUDENTS

Students, faculty, and staff protect yourselves against commonly used scams.

Recently, UCLA PD has received several reports regarding fraudulent checks and scams. These scams often begin with the suspect answering advertisements on public online auction websites for books for sale or apartments for rent.

Over Payment Scam is where a suspect posing as a “customer” sends you a check, money order or cashier’s check that is not good.

- You are sent a check or money order for more than the purchase price and the buyer asks you to send the extra money to someone who will take care of shipping. But... there's no reason why they can't send that person the money directly.
- The customer tells you that a check or money order payment will come from someone who owes them money and they tell you to deduct your share and send them the rest. Maybe they're in a foreign country and because of currency differences it's difficult to pay you directly. But... it's easy to transfer money electronically from anywhere – there's no reason to have someone else send you payment.
- You are sent the wrong amount “by mistake” and you are asked to return the excess.

Rental Scheme is where a suspect posing as a “renter” sends you a check, money order or cashier’s check that is not good.

- A potential renter claims to be moving from outside the area or even another country. They send a check or money order for rent, plus extra to cover shipping expenses for their belongings. They ask you to forward the excess to someone. They may let you “keep” some of the extra money as payment for your troubles.
- They have unexpected expenses and ask you to cash a check or money order, then send some of the deposit back as a favor. But, they never intend to move in. By the time you discover the scam they have already moved on to their next victim.

UCLA PD RECOMMENDS:

- Do not accept a check, money order, or cashier’s check for overpayment of the purchase price, even if the buyer has a “good” reason for sending a larger amount.
- If you receive a check, money order, or cashier’s check for over payment contact UCLA PD at (310) 825-1491 before you deposit the check.
- If you are selling online, do not make deals with a buyer outside of the auction site.
- Be suspicious if you are asked to send money to another person via a wire transfer, especially to a foreign country.
- Remember... legitimate buyers will be happy to send the exact amount you're owed.

***Information obtained from FakeChecks.org**