



Public Service Announcement

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION



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EMPLOYMENT SCAMS

The Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3), a cooperative effort of the FBI and the National White Collar Crime Center, is alerting citizens to scams that target those who use the Internet to find employment.

According to reports, bogus foreign-based companies are recruiting citizens in the US on several employment-search web sites for home-based employment opportunities. These positions often involve reselling or re-shipping merchandise to destinations outside the US, and are also advertised as Customer Service Representatives. Prospective employees are required to provide personal information as well as copies of their identification, such as a driver's license, birth certificate, or social security card. Those employees that are "hired" by these companies are then told that their salary will be paid by check from a US company, reported to be a creditor of the employer. This is done under the pretense that the employer does not have any banking set up in the US. The amount of the check is significantly more than the employee is owed for salary and expenses, and the employee is instructed to deposit the check into their own account, and then wire the overpayment back to the employer's bank, usually located in eastern Europe. The checks are later found to be fraudulent, often after the wire transfer has taken place.

In a similar scam, some web-based international companies are advertising for affiliate opportunities, offering individuals the chance to sell high-end electronic items, such as Plasma television sets and home theater systems, at significantly reduced prices. The affiliates are instructed to offer the merchandise on well-known Internet auction web sites. The affiliates will accept the payments, and pay the company, typically by means of wire transfer to an eastern European bank. The company is then supposed to drop-ship the merchandise directly to the buyer, thus eliminating the need for the affiliate to stock or warehouse merchandise. The merchandise never ships, which often prompts the buyers to take legal action against the affiliates, who in essence are victims themselves.

With the number of identity theft cases growing exponentially, the IC3 is reminding citizens to protect their personal information, particularly when dealing with unfamiliar individuals and businesses.

Anyone who thinks they might have fallen victim to this or any other type of Internet scam can notify the IC3 through its web site at www.ic3.gov.