



Financial Crime Trend Bulletin :

Holiday Scams

2019-11-12

FRAUD: Recognize it. Reject it. Report it.

#kNowFRAUD

Purpose

This bulletin was prepared to warn consumers of the top scams that regularly trend around the holiday season.

Don't Get Scrooged Shopping Online

Consumers need to be vigilant when shopping online. Fraudsters easily create websites that share the look and feel of legitimate manufacturers. They generate traffic to their sites by advertising their products at deep discounts. Consumers may receive counterfeit products, lesser valued & unrelated goods, or nothing at all.

Warning Signs – How to Protect Yourself

- If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- Beware of pop-ups that direct you away from the current website.
- Consumers should verify the URL and seller contact information.
- Search for any warnings posted online and read reviews before making a purchase.
- Spelling mistakes and grammatical errors are other indicators of a potentially fraudulent website.
- Use a credit card when shopping online. Consumers are offered fraud protection and may receive a refund. If you have received anything other than the product you ordered, contact your credit card company to dispute the charge.

Keep the Grinch Out of the Holidays

Consumers selling products or services online should be suspicious of payment offers that are more than the asking price. In most cases, consumers will receive fraudulent payments. Unfortunately, the consumer will only discover that they have not received a real payment until after they have already sent the merchandise and/or sent additional funds to a third party.

Warning Signs – How to Protect Yourself

- Beware of non-local buyers who want to buy without seeing the product first.
- Beware of communications with bad spelling and grammar.
- Never send merchandise without confirming that payment has been received. Digital payments are either sent & received or not; they will not be *Pending* until a tracking number is received.
- Never send money to get money.

'Tis the Season of Giving

The end of the year is a busy season for charities looking for donations. Fraudsters know this and will use the names of legitimate charities to collect money from well-intentioned consumers. Consumers should do their due diligence and research the name and charitable registration number with Revenue Canada before providing any personal or financial information.

If you think you or someone you know has been a victim of fraud, please contact the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre at 1-888-495-8501 or report online at www.antifraudcentre.ca.