

WARNING



Don't Be The Victim Of A Check Scam

If someone sends you a check then asks you to deposit the check into your account and wire transfer money out of your account, **WATCH OUT**, you may become the victim of a popular scam.

HOW DOES THE SCAM WORK?

The scam usually occurs when you are selling merchandise via the Internet or other publications. However, other variations of the scam include:

- Notice you have won a foreign lottery or sweepstakes
- Promise of receiving a percent of money for the transferring of funds to your bank account for safekeeping, usually from outside the United States
- Inheritance from a recently deceased distant relative you had no previous knowledge of
- Unsolicited emails, faxes or letters requesting an immediate response

Regardless of the pitch, all scams involve you being contacted by individuals claiming to be from either within or outside the United States. These individuals agree to forward you a check. After the check is deposited, you may be contacted and told an elaborate story and then asked to wire transfer back all or some of the money.

After you withdraw or wire the money from your account it is determined the check you were given was a counterfeit. At this time the check will be returned to the bank unpaid and the full amount of the check will be deducted from **your** account.

Although there are many variations to the scam, one common variable is they all seem too good to be true, and they usually are.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LOSS TO MY ACCOUNT?

You are responsible for the check(s) you deposit into your account. Only you can determine the risk of the business transaction you entered into — you were the one whom made arrangements for the check to be sent to you. If the check bounces and is returned unpaid for any reason, you are fully responsible for any loss related to the bogus check. In most cases, the bank can immediately debit your account(s) or file litigation to recover the money.

WHY DID THE BANK ALLOW ME TO WITHDRAW THE MONEY?

Federal law requires banks to make deposited funds available to you usually within 1 to 5 business days. The fact you can withdraw cash from your account shortly after depositing a check does not necessarily mean the check you deposited is good. Counterfeit and bogus checks can sometimes take weeks to be discovered and returned to your bank unpaid.

WHY DIDN'T THE BANK KNOW THE CHECK WAS BAD?

Bank employees merely process checks and in most instances cannot determine if a check is real or not. Bank tellers cannot determine if a cashier's check or certified check is valid, bank employees simply process the item.

If you believe you have been the victim of or are currently being solicited by a fraudster, contact your local police department immediately.

For further information please visit these websites:

www.uspostalinspectors.gov

www.lookstogoodtobetrue.com

www.ftc.gov