



Internet Employment Scams

An increasing number of people now conduct their employment searches online. This increasing popularity of Internet job searches has led to new opportunities for thieves to gain access to consumers' personal identifying information and, ultimately, to consumers' money.

Scam artists may attempt to lure job-seekers into disclosing their personal identifying information by posting jobs on legitimate job search sites, creating their own phony Web sites, or contacting consumers directly by e-mail or message board. Scammers also may use a company name that is very similar to the name of a legitimate company to create a false sense of security for applicants. If you are searching for a job online, there are some simple precautions you should take:

- ✓ **Safeguard social security numbers.** Potential employers may require you to provide them with your social security number so that they can do a background check or credit check. However, you should always research the company independently to verify its legitimacy before providing your social security number.
- ✓ **Never give out financial information.** There is practically no reason why an employer would need a prospective employee's personal financial information. You should never give out your bank account number, credit card numbers, or PIN codes in response to a job posting or e-mail solicitation, and you should never wire money to a prospective employer.
- ✓ **Check the company's contact information and Web site.** It is important for the applicant to verify that a company is legitimate before continuing with the application process. That can be done by checking the address and telephone number the company has provided and making sure the Web site is operating.
- ✓ **Watch for indications that the advertisement or job offer is bogus.** Many online scams contain misspellings and bad grammar. Also, an employer using an e-mail that is not affiliated with the company's domain name can be an indication of potential fraud.
- ✓ **Be cautious of job postings from overseas employers.** A legitimate foreign company should have the resources to conduct business in the United States without using a private citizen's bank account.

Consumers who believe they have been the victim of an Internet job scam can file a complaint on the Web at www.IllinoisAttorneyGeneral.gov or call one of the Attorney General's Consumer Fraud Hotlines for assistance.

Chicago
1-800-386-5438
TTY: 1-800-964-3013

Springfield
1-800-243-0618
TTY: 1-877-844-5461

Carbondale
1-800-243-0607
TTY: 1-877-675-9339