

Job Scams & Safety Tips

If a position or job offer seems to be too good to be true, if you feel uncomfortable with some of the information requested, or something just doesn't seem right – either back off or proceed with extreme caution. Even if the original position description seems valid, if you receive follow-up e-mails, phone calls or job offers that seem unusual, you need to proceed cautiously.

Beware of Check & Money Order Scams

The underlying premise to this rising scam relies on the victim receiving a counterfeit check or money order, depositing the item in their bank account, and forwarding a portion of the funds through a wire transfer service (Moneygram or the Western Union) to the scammer.

Research Each Company

When applying for any position, it is important that you research the company thoroughly before releasing any of your personal information.

- Review the company's website
- Google search the organization name followed by the words such as, "fraud," "scam," "reviews," "complaints."

Here are some red flags:

- You get hired without ever interviewing or meeting your potential employer.
- There are multiple misspellings in the job description and your correspondence with the person recruiting you.
- At the time of hire, the employer tells you they are traveling internationally and needs you to be their assistant or run errands for them.
- You are asked to give credit card, bank or PayPal account numbers.
- You are requested to send a payment by wire service or courier.
- You are offered a large payment or reward in exchange for allowing the use of your bank account - often for depositing checks or transferring money.
- You receive an unexpectedly large check.
- You are asked to transfer money, including via e-Bay, PayPal or Western Union money orders.
- You are promised a large salary for little work, or the salary is way out of range for an entry level position, part-time job, or internship.
- The person requests personal information such as your Social Security Number before being considered for the job.
- You are asked to send a photocopy of your ID, i.e., driver's license to "verify identity."
- You are requested to complete a background check before being considered for a position.

- The posting appears to come from a legitimate company or organization, but the contact's e-mail address doesn't match the company's website domain (i.e., jdoe@gmail.com rather than jdoe@companyname.com).
- The job posting doesn't mention the responsibilities of the position; rather it focuses on the amount of money you will make.
- The job position seems to be for traditional employment, but upon further research or contact, is an independent contractor or franchise opportunity.
- The position requires upfront fees.

Some other tips:

- You may receive a job offer in response to your application to a legitimate-appearing job description that is just a marketing e-mail to sell you job search "help."
- Be wary of postings for Mystery Shoppers, work at home, or Virtual Administrative Assistants or Bookkeepers.
- If the position listing is for an international opportunity, does it include travel expenses? Upfront program fees? Research the company and compare its program/benefits with other similar opportunities.
- If the ad mentions upfront payments, proceed cautiously.
- Verify that a URL listed in the ad goes to the internet domain of the company listed. For example, if the ad posts one URL such as <http://www.jobs.com/> but when you click on it, you end up on another URL like http://www.myjobs.com, it could be a scam.
- When using other job boards than SlugQuest, read their privacy policies carefully. Review how easy it is for employers to post jobs by going through the job site's posting links.

What to do if you encounter suspicious postings in SlugQuest:

- Please report your experience to UCSC Career Center at Career-Center@ucsc.edu or 831-459-5705, the UCSC Police Department, and The Internet Crime Complaint Center (<https://www.ic3.gov/default.aspx>).
- End all communication with the employer, and if you provided personal information, monitor your accounts over the next few days, to be on the safe side.
- Contact the police and report the fraud or scam.
- If you have sent money to a fraudulent employer, contact your bank or credit card company immediately to close your account and dispute the charges.
- If the incident occurred entirely over the internet, file an incident report with the FCC at 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357) or <http://www.justice.gov/criminal-ccips>.