

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT Overpayment Scams



MINISTRY OF **CONSUMER SERVICES**
www.ontario.ca/consumerservices



Ontario's **Ministry of Consumer Services** works to educate, empower and protect consumers so they can be confident and informed when buying goods and services in this province.

What Are Overpayment Scams?

Overpayment scams happen when sellers receive fake cheques and are tricked into wiring overpayments back to phony buyers. Often these cheques are from foreign countries, making them hard to trace and making it nearly impossible to get your money back.

How Do They Work?

Phony buyers send fake cheques to sellers for more than the price of the goods sold. They tell buyers to deposit the cheques and immediately wire the surplus money back to them. They may sweeten the deal by telling the merchant to keep part of the surplus amount.

The fake cheque eventually bounces. The merchant is now responsible for paying for the goods – and the surplus amount wired to the phony buyer.



How Can I Protect Myself And My Company?

Be aware. Be alert. Train the people who handle your sales to avoid overpayment scams.

- Never accept a cheque for more than your selling price. Do not be tempted by any pleas or stories.
- Never wire money to a buyer. A legitimate buyer will not ask you to do it. If you wire money and then there is a problem with the buyer's cheque, your money will be long gone.
- Know who you are dealing with. Double-check company names and addresses independently.
- Resist pressure to "act now." Wait for the cheque to clear your account. If the buyer's offer is good now, it should be good when the cheque clears.

Need Help?

To report a scam, call local police or The Canadian Anti-Fraud Call Centre (PhoneBusters) at 1-888-495-8501.

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HERE TO HELP

Visit our website at:

www.ontario.ca/consumerservices

Call us:

Greater Toronto Area

416-326-8800

Toll-free at

1-800-889-9768

TTY (for those who are hard of hearing)

Greater Toronto Area

416-229-6086

TTY toll-free

1-877-666-6545

Email us:

consumer@ontario.ca