

Online Shopping Fraud

This is the sale of non-existent, stolen, fake or poor quality items online and via auction sites where the placing and withdrawing of fake higher value bids are made to make items sell for a **LOWER PRICE THAN THEIR TRUE WORTH.**

How is it done?

This scam can affect you both as a buyer and seller. If an item does arrive it turns out to be different to what was advertised and/or of much lower value. **FAKE BIDS** can also be placed and withdrawn at the last minute by the seller under a different user name in order to encourage the buyer to bid more (Known as a “Shill” bid)

You may be asked to give your personal financial information to an online seller who will then **USE THAT INFORMATION TO DEFRAUD YOU.** You may be directed to a website that looks like an auction site but has been created by the scammer to capture your payment details.

As a seller you may be asked to complete a transaction outside the online market place meaning you **LOSE YOUR PROTECTION.** You may be given various excuses by the buyer about not being able to pay with a further request for you to deliver the items prior to payment with a “promise” that payment will soon follow.

YOU MAY RECEIVE SPOOF E MAILS which are designed to look like the online auction site you are registered with. They will request that you update your account details or re-enter them because your account has been “suspended”. This of course is all untrue and yet another way to get your personal information.

How can I prevent this?

ALWAYS MAKE PAYMENT ON THE AUCTION SITE and never pay via bank transfer or release your personal financial information to anyone.

NEVER CLICK ON LINKS provided in e mails even if they do appear to be genuine and be wary of expensive items for sale at low starting bids of where words such as “genuine” and “authentic” have been used as it is highly unlikely that designer goods will ever be associated with words such as “cheap” or bargain.

ALWAYS BE SURE to check out the address and phone number of a company and remember that just because a website says .co.uk it does not mean that it is UK based..

ALWAYS DOUBLE CHECK THE WEBSITE ADDRESS as scammers will often create websites with a *similar* name in order to trick you into thinking you are dealing with the genuine website

Never pay for a vehicle without viewing the vehicle itself and relevant documentation first and do not get enticed in by any “discount” offered if you make payment prior to viewing the vehicle.

Be wary of accepting cheques for payment as even if it clears **YOU ARE STILL LIABLE** if it is forged or stolen and NEVER accept a cheque for a higher amount than what is due and refund the difference. Always ensure that you know the terms and conditions of any auction website including the returns policy and dispute resolution policy.



Useful contacts

www.thamesvalley.police.uk Tel: 101 / 999

www.victims-first.org.uk

www.getsafeonline.org

www.actionfraud.police.uk Tel: 0300123 2040

www.ageuk.org.uk

www.cyberaware.gov.uk

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

www.nationaltradingstandards.uk

Please contact Thames Valley Police for more details via telephone dialling 101, or visit our website at www.thamesvalley.police.uk

