

## **Don't Let It Happen to You!**

Challenging economic times tend to breed scams and fraud. It's a regrettable byproduct of the times. That's why it's even more important now to be vigilant and not fall victim to one of the clever scams. Remember the adage, *if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!*

Listed below are just a few of the things we've spotted out there:

### **Employment Opportunities**

Discovered on the internet, a UK company needs help with their receivables in the U.S. You would receive checks for the company, take them to the bank, cash them, and keep a "fee" of 10% then wire the rest of the money as instructed. Often the money orders are for an identical amount. All checks are returned as fraudulent.

Another similar company "hires" a person online to bring in a series of money orders in the same amount. The job and checks are a scam.

After answering an ad in a local paper a person is hired to be a "shopper" and brings in a large check to be cashed. The instructions were to cash the check at her local bank, spend about \$75 on goods purchased at a large national chain, keep \$400 as her "fee" and then test this store's courtesy desk by wiring the remaining balance back to the company that hired the person. This is a scam.

### **Awards and Sweepstakes**

If you did not enter into a sweepstakes, you would not be winning or be in the "running" to win. If someone says to you that you need to cash a check at your local bank for taxes and fees you need to pay in order to claim a monetary prize, you are being scammed. Chances are you never entered sweepstakes or a "compensation draw" for major retail store customers, therefore how could you possibly win? This is a scam.

You or your child receives an award letter and check in the mail for a large sum of money. The check and the award are a scam. Your child will likely be angry with you when you tell them that they cannot transact the check, but it does represent an excellent opportunity to teach them about the nasty people in the world who try to take advantage of others.

### **eBay sales**

You believe you have sold some items on eBay. You receive several U.S. Postal Money Orders which are more than you were asking for the items. You deposit the checks in your bank account, then withdraw the extra payment and wire it back. You then spend the rest of the funds before the checks are returned as fraudulent. When asked by the teller if you know the person who gave them to you, you reply "yes" even though you really did not.

### **Remember, the customer is always responsible for all checks they cash and/or deposit at the Bank.**

We accept them conditionally. Insurance does not cover the Bank for check losses. If fraudulent checks are returned to us, it is the customer's responsibility to repay the Bank even if they have already spent the funds. Tellers and other Bank representatives ask you questions about the checks you are cashing to protect you and Bank. If you have doubts, ask us! That's why we're here. Also, [FakeChecks.org](http://FakeChecks.org) is a GREAT resource. Keep your eyes open, and remember if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!