

Craigslist / eBay Car Sales Scam-Alert

We want to alert everyone to an online scam that involves our Fort Belvoir military community.

Lately, we have witnessed a trend of fraudulent auto listings on sites such as Craigslist and eBay, which suggest that military personnel at Fort Belvoir are selling fictitious cars, and stealing buyers' money in the process.

The ads vary slightly, but are similar. The seller indicates that he or she is a military member stationed on Fort Belvoir, and needs to sell a valuable car at a big discount due to a pending deployment or other false crisis. In some cases, the ads indicate that upon payment, the "Fort Belvoir Department of Logistics" will ship the car for free once payments have been received by the seller. When payments are made, the seller vanishes, and the buyer soon learns that he or she has paid thousands of dollars for a car that does not exist.

Here is a sample of one such scam:

"This 2007 Toyota Camry with 42,600 miles, runs and drives excellent. This car has been extremely well maintained with a full service history. Free of any liens or loans. This car is in excellent working conditions, no scratches, flaws or any kind of damage, slightly used in 100% working and looking conditions. I bought it when i was serving in Fort Belvoir, U.S. Army base near Bethesda, MD and now I am in United Kingdom. I have dropped my price to \$2,800.00 USD (purchase price) since this is an Urgent Sale! and I need to sell it before 05 July, when I will be deployed in Iraq with my platoon replacing the troops scheduled to come home. If you're interested to conclude this purchase in a timely manner email me your; Full Name and Shipping Address to open a case with eBay they will contact you to explain the entire procedure. The financial part will be managed by them, which means that you will have a 15 days inspection period before committing to buy the car. In this way both, buyer and seller are 100% covered during the steps of this transaction. I will take in consideration only those buyers who are really interested in buying the car, to be sure that I don't waste my time with endless discussions. This way, I shall be assured of the serious intentions. So if you are interested please e-mail me back for more details about the transaction. Here you can find more pictures with the car: *linkdeleted*.

Mileage: 42,600
Body type: Sedan
Transmission: Automatic
Engine: 4 - Cyl. Cylinder
Fuel type: Gasoline
Exterior color: Silver
Interior color: Gray
Doors: 5
Title: Clear

Thank you and have a great day,
Corporal NAME NAME”

Lottery Scams

While on the topic of local scams, it's a good time to take a look at another popular one – the lottery scam. This scam uses a very authentic looking but very FAKE Money Order to lure in the unsuspecting. Remember, if you have not purchased a lottery ticket, you cannot win a lottery prize. This is true in the United States and every other county in the world. This is true even if you receive apparently legitimate money orders or personal checks from someone who tells you that you have won money.

Here's the scam – you receive a letter from an individual or a Lottery company, which includes a Money Order or Check for a large sum of money – usually about \$900-\$1000.

The letter informs you that you have won a large cash lottery prize, (and you **should** be thinking, “...but I didn't enter a Lottery”...). The letter tells you that in order to claim your prize, you first need to pay a tax or a fee in order to collect the truckloads of money that you have just won. (Again, a clear indicator that you are dealing with a criminal is that you need to send money to get money.) The letter even includes a (bogus) Money Order or Check for \$900-\$1000 to cover the fee or tax. You are asked to cash the check, and wire the money back by Western Union or Money Gram to an agent of the lottery.

Never attempt to cash such money orders or personal checks because when they bounce, you will be liable to the bank for the money you received.

Also, it is a crime to attempt to cash such money orders or personal checks when you should know them to be frauds, which all of these are.

If you attempt to cash the Money Order or Check, you will probably have committed a crime.

If a bank mistakenly pays you for the Money Order or Check, **you will be required to repay every penny to the bank that was duped.**

If you then send the money to the criminal posing as an agent for the fictional lottery, you have been doubly-scammed, and will never see the money again.

Report all scams to your command, your legal assistance office, the FTC and your local police agency.

Our best protection against being ripped-off is common sense and due diligence. Here are a few simple rules to follow in your online transactions:

- Deal only with local buyers and sellers
- Never wire funds to a distant buyer, via Western Union or any other carrier
- Be wary if the other party wants to use an escrow service such as BidPay, Squaretrade, or even PayPal
- Never give out personal financial information (eBay or PayPal info, checking account number, SSN, etc.)
- Always remember: BUYER BEWARE
- Use common sense, if something appears too good to be true, it probably isn't true.

As always, a bit of common sense should keep you safe from most criminals, but to help drive the point home, please remember - if you have not purchased a lottery ticket, you cannot win a lottery prize. There are no rich bank executives / royal family members / exiled government officials in Nigeria (or any other part of the world) that need a trusted friend to help them move money to the United States. People do not sell valuable items at discounts of 50%. Generally speaking, no one is giving away money.