



For Immediate Release, September 25, 2014

WICHITA, KAN. – Buying cars/boats on Craigslist

The District Attorney's Consumer Protection Division has received multiple calls from consumers reporting being scammed when attempting to purchase a vehicle or boat off Craigslist. Here are two recent examples:

- A consumer located information about a vintage pickup in another state and was told the truck would be discounted \$3,000 off the asking price if the buyer would pick it up himself. To "secure the sale," the consumer deposited \$7,500 into his own account and gave the seller his bank account number. After driving to the location, the consumer found the address was on a military base and the home was vacant. The \$7,500 was taken from his account immediately after giving the seller his account information. The consumer has filed a fraud claim with his bank.
- A local consumer used a Green Dot Money Card to pay \$2,500 for a pickup in Dallas found on Craigslist. After giving the seller the MoneyPak numbers, the buyer could never reach the seller again. He lost his money and the truck. The consumer acknowledged reading warnings about Craigslist and MoneyPak card transactions.

Recognizing a scam is not always easy but these precautions may help you avoid being taken:

- Look for negative vehicle history that is not disclosed in the Craigslist posting. Check with CARFAX to review the vehicle's history. If there are no problems listed, you should be cautious. Such a good deal may be an indication of a scam.
- Perform a search to see if the photograph of the vehicle posted on Craigslist has been stolen/copied from another site. If another website (for example, a reputable car dealership) is showing the same car for sale but the car you are viewing on Craigslist shows, "Sale by Owner," this may be an indication the photo was copied from another website.
- Ask the seller to send you copies of photos or pictures of specific areas on the vehicle. Any reluctance or "pushback" from the seller may be an indication he or she does not have physical access to the car and the posting is a scam.
- Know who you are dealing with. Check with Kelley Blue Book (www.kbb.com) or National Automobile Dealers Assn Guide (www.nadaguides.com) to determine if the price of a vehicle you are considering is "too good to be true." Such low pricing is an immediate red flag the posting may be a scam.
- Request a free report from the National Insurance Crime Bureau at www.nicb.org to determine if a vehicle has been reported stolen, previously flooded, or salvaged. You must enter a Vehicle Identification Number.
- Confirm the seller's physical address and phone number. Google the address to see if there is an actual location. Scammers often use addresses that are nonexistent, vacant, or for an unrelated business or person. Google the telephone number for negative comments associated with that number or multiple cars offers. Multiple listings with a single phone number that is not an authorized car dealer may indicate a scam.

Common tactics used in scams:

- The seller is in another country and unreachable
- Use of personal information such as “Must get rid of immediately! The seller has military deployment or relocation,” or “Must sell immediately due to divorce”
- Request for payment or deposit by means that are virtually untraceable such as money wires through Western Union, Green Dot or similar money card, or cash

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