



CONSUMER NEWS

SAN DIEGO CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Job Scams

March 2011

Con artists are always looking for ways to take advantage of the latest economic trends. With the increase in unemployment, there is an increase in scams aimed at taking money from those who are searching for a job. This newsletter sets forth some of the common scams and tips to avoid becoming a victim of one of them.

WORK AT HOME SCAMS:

They are everywhere: signs that tell you to call a number so you can make a lot of money working at home. These scams are proliferating. If you call the number, the person offers you a start up kit that you must buy for a sizeable sum. Here are some red flags that will indicate you are not dealing with a legitimate business:

- Representations that you will get rich quick with little effort
- There is an upfront fee for "background searches" or "training." Be especially wary of requests that you

send payment by wire transfer.

- Written advertisements or emails that have grammatical errors or typographical mistakes.
- Applicants are asked to provide personal and financial information.
- The business cannot provide you with a business statement explaining how long the business has existed, its locations, ownership information and organizational structure.

It is important to note that generally those who offer a legitimate work-at-home plan are selling you an investment, not hiring you. They generally provide you with items to sell and materials to help you sell the items. If you make money, it is from selling the items you purchased at a price higher than you paid for them. Thus, you are your employer. You should not have to provide a Social Security Number to the person selling you this investment because the person will not be reporting any wages to the government or withholding

money for Social Security on your behalf.

Prior to purchasing any work at home investment, check out the business on the Better Business Bureau's website (www.sandiego.bbb.org); do a general internet search of the business name; and ask the business for a business statement and references.

ACTING SCAMS:

Given our proximity to Los Angeles, we have seen several employment scams in San Diego involving offers to get applicants jobs as actors or models. There are specific laws that regulate talent agencies. A talent agency is a person or business that offers to procure employment for an artist. The law protects artists who are defined as actors, radio artists, musical artists, directors, musical directors, writers, cinematographers, composers, lyricists and models. The scammers violate these laws by:

- Not having a license to be a talent agent.

