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FRAUD ALERT

From the Denver District Attorney

Be Smart When Using Craigslist

A recent article in the Denver Post highlighted a scam involving the popular online classified internet site Craigslist. The scam involves both property owners as well as those in the market to rent property.

Scam artists run false ads for rental property – property they don't own – which may or may not actually be for rent or sale. The owner of the home is unaware that their property has been listed as a rental property on Craigslist until a stranger shows up at their house expecting to move in or in some cases has already moved in to a vacant property with the assumption they have a legitimate arrangement with the owner. Unfortunately, at a minimum, these renters have paid scam artists a deposit, a month's rent and moving expenses.

Recognizing that most transactions on Craigslist are legitimate, it is still important to always take precautions:

- **Deal locally with people you meet in person!**
- **Do not do business with someone who refuses to meet you in person!**
- **Never wire funds to a stranger!**
- **Never give out financial information to a stranger!**
- **Never cash a check that exceeds the amount owed to you and then return the excess money to the person who sent you the check!**

Unfortunately, there is little that law enforcement can do to recover losses incurred in long distance deals such as these that are made via the internet. However, if personal contact was made with the scam artist or if personal contact information is known, Denver residents can contact our Economic Crimes fraud line and they will determine the viability of each situation on a case by case basis.

To report internet fraud contact the Internet Fraud Complaint Center – <http://www.ic3.gov>.

For assistance call the Denver DA's Fraud Line: 720-913-9179

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