

Audience Handout

This CPR Productivity Pack is for use with the video:

The Fraud Files: How to Spot Scams, Cons, and Crooks



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Discussion Questions

Test your knowledge

THE FRAUD FILES presents five different cases involving con artists. You may want to STOP the tape after each case and discuss the questions posed by the narrator on what could have been done to thwart the con job. You may also want to talk about a local case. After viewing the complete program, go on to the following questions to prompt a more general discussion of fraud and how it affects you and your community.

Q: Who are the people most likely to be targeted by con artists? Why?

Q: List and discuss some of the Tip-Offs that a con job is underway.

Q: What are some ways you can avoid being cheated?

Q: Why is it imperative to report a case of suspected fraud as soon as possible?

Q: What are some agencies you can contact if you suspect a case of fraud?

Internet Fraud Tips

Tips for avoiding fraud online
From www.fraud.org

- **Know who you're dealing with.** If the seller or charity is unfamiliar, check with your state or local consumer protection agency and the Better Business Bureau. Some Web sites have feedback forums, which can provide useful information about other people's experiences with particular sellers. Get the physical address and phone number in case there is a problem later.
- **Look for information about how complaints are handled.** It can be difficult to resolve complaints, especially if the seller or charity is located in another country. Look on the Web site for information about programs the company or organization participates in that require it to meet standards for reliability and help to handle disputes.
- **Be aware that no complaints is no guarantee.** Fraudulent operators open and close quickly, so the fact that no one has made a complaint yet doesn't mean that the seller or charity is legitimate. You still need to look for other danger signs of fraud.
- **Don't believe promises of easy money.** If someone claims that you can earn money with little or no work, get a loan or credit card even if you have bad credit, or make money on an investment with little or no risk, it's probably a scam.
- **Understand the offer.** A legitimate seller will give you all the details about the products or services, the total price, the delivery time, the refund and cancellation policies, and the terms of any warranty.
- **Resist pressure.** Legitimate companies and charities will be happy to give you time to make a decision. It's probably a scam if they demand that you act immediately or won't take "No" for an answer.
- **Think twice before entering contests operated by unfamiliar companies.** Fraudulent marketers sometimes use contest entry forms to identify potential victims.
- **Be cautious about unsolicited emails.** They are often fraudulent. If you are familiar with the company or charity that sent you the email and you don't want to receive further messages, send a reply asking to be removed from the email list. However, responding to unknown senders may simply verify that yours is a working email address and result in even more unwanted messages from strangers. The best approach may simply be to delete the email.
- **Beware of imposters.** Someone might send you an email pretending to be connected with a business or charity, or create a Web site that looks just like that of a well-known company or charitable organization. If you're not sure that you're dealing with the real thing, find another way to contact the legitimate business or charity and ask.
- **Guard your personal information.** Don't provide your credit card or bank account number unless you are actually paying for something. Your social security number should not be necessary unless you are applying for credit. Be especially suspicious if someone claiming to be from a company with whom you have an account asks for information that the business already has.
- **Beware of "dangerous downloads."** In downloading programs to see pictures, hear music, play games, etc., you could download a virus that wipes out your computer files or connects your modem to a foreign telephone number, resulting in expensive phone charges. Only download programs from Web sites you know and trust. Read all user agreements carefully.
- **Pay the safest way.** Credit cards are the safest way to pay for online purchases because you can dispute the charges if you never get the goods or services or the offer was misrepresented. Federal law limits your liability to \$50 if someone makes unauthorized charges to your account, and most credit card issuers will remove them completely if you report the problem promptly.

Business and Telemarketing Scams

Scams against businesses

- **Do business with companies you know and trust.** If you don't know them, check them out.
- **Understand the offer.** Get all the details and promises in writing.
- **Check all bills and invoices carefully.** It's hard to get your money back once you've paid it to a con artist.
- **Guard your financial or other account information.** Don't provide it to anyone unless there is a legitimate reason to do so as part of a transaction.
- **Educate your employees about avoiding scams.** Make sure they understand their roles and responsibilities.

Telemarketing scams

- **Know whom you're dealing with.** If the company or charity is unfamiliar, check it out with your state or local consumer protection agency and the Better Business Bureau.
- **Be aware that no complaints is no guarantee.** Fraudulent operators open and close quickly, so the fact that no one has made a complaint yet doesn't mean that the company or charity is legitimate. You still need to look for other danger signs of fraud.
- **Don't believe promises of easy money.** If someone claims that you can earn money with little or no work, get a loan or credit card even if you have bad credit, or make money on an investment with little or no risk, it's probably a scam.
- **Think twice before entering contests operated by unfamiliar companies.** Fraudulent marketers sometimes use contest entry forms to identify potential victims.
- **Never pay to play.** It's illegal for a company to require you to buy something or pay a fee in order to win or claim a prize. Buying something doesn't improve your chances of winning.
- **Resist pressure.** Legitimate companies will be happy to send you detailed information and give you time to make a decision. It's probably a scam if the marketer demands that you act immediately or won't take "No" for an answer.
- **Guard your personal information.** Only provide your credit card or bank account number when you are actually paying for something. Don't give your social security number to a telemarketer.
- **Beware of bogus "recovery services."** These crooks tell consumers that, for an upfront fee, they can recover money lost to fraud. Legitimate law enforcement agencies don't charge to help telemarketing fraud victims.
- **Know your rights.** Under federal law, you can tell telemarketers to put you on their "Do Not Call" lists and sue them in small claims court for \$500 if they call again. To document your request, ask for the name and address of the company on whose behalf the salesperson is calling, and record that information, along with the date, on a pad that you keep by the phone. If the company calls again, write down the date. Contact your state or local consumer protection agency to find out if you also have "Do Not Call" rights under state law.
- **Report violations.** If your "Do Not Call" rights are violated, contact the Federal Trade Commission, 877-382-4357 or www.ftc.gov (the FTC does not have jurisdiction over banks, insurance companies, and telephone companies), and the Federal Communications Commission, 888-225-5322 or www.fcc.gov. Report violations of state law to the appropriate state agency.

Internet Resources

Association for the Advancement of Retired Persons
www.aarp.org

Better Business Bureau
(including online consumer complaint form)
www.bbb.org

Federal Trade Commission
Consumer Protection Division
(including online consumer complaint form)
www.ftc.gov/ftc/consumer.htm

National Fraud Information Center
www.fraud.org

U.S. Consumer Gateway
www.consumer.gov/yourmoney.htm

U.S. Department of Justice Fraud Section
www.usdoj.gov/criminal/fraud.html

U.S. Postal Service Postal Inspection Service
(including online consumer complaint form)
www.usps.gov/websites/depart/inspect/consmenu.htm

Additional Crime Prevention Sites:

Crime Prevention Coalition
www.crimepreventcoalition.org

Crime Prevention Resources
www.crimeprevent.com

Crimestoppers International
www.c-s-i.org

National Association of Chiefs of Police
<http://www.aphf.org/nacop.html>

National Association of Town Watch
www.nationaltownwatch.org

National Crime Prevention Council
www.weprevent.org

National Safety Council
www.nsc.org

National Sheriffs' Association
www.sheriffs.org

United Against Crime
www.unitedagainst.com

U.S. Department of Justice
Building Blocks for Safe and Healthy Communities
www.ojp.usdoj.gov/

For further information contact:
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