



Mystery Shopper/Publisher's Clearing House Check Fraud

A new twist on an old fraud is popping up. We have become aware of fraud on LinkedIn where an individual is offered money (a check) to mystery shop for them. However, they give you a fraudulent check that looks real, has the proper bank routing number but is a fraudulent item. The individual is told to deposit the check and notify the criminals when it is deposited to get further instructions. The consumer is told to withdraw a certain amount and purchase a money order for the criminals. The criminal gets their money and the check which is a fraudulent item comes back and the consumer is stuck for the full amount plus fees.

A similar fraud is being perpetrated under the guise of a Publishers Clearing House Sweepstakes winner. A consumer receives a packet with a good sized check stating they have won the sweepstakes and more money is due them but they need to deposit the check (which is fraudulent) and contact them upon doing so. The consumer is then instructed to not discuss this awesome prize with anyone, including their bank or credit union. They are then instructed to withdraw cash and wire the amount stated via western union to receive the rest of their prize. The criminals are very smooth and unfortunately a lot of trusting people in the general public fall for these scams.

THE BOTTOM LINE IS TO NEVER PAY FOR A PRIZE YOU HAVE "WON".