

Protect Your Investment

Detect Cyber Scams Targeting Home Sales



Cyber scams are a reality of today's world—and real estate purchases are tempting targets. The news is filled with stories of emails being hacked and impersonators calling people buying or selling a home. All scams have a similar goal; to dupe trusting individuals into wiring money to fraudulent accounts. The good news is awareness, diligence and personal connections can help keep your home purchase safe. Follow these tips:

Bring a certified check: A certified check is the best way to avoid the potential of wire fraud all together. There are no online communications or transactions to intercept.

Keep it personal: Hackers often present time-saving emails *without* personal contact. Instead, speak directly to your local contact at the title company. An email can be impersonated, a familiar voice can't.

Never email personal information: Information such as your social security number, routing number or account information should *never be sent via email—to anyone*. Stark agents or a title company will *never* request secure information via email or change wiring instructions during a transaction.

Verify the calls you receive: Never disclose information over the phone to a voice or name you don't recognize. Always Google the correct phone number of the title company or get it directly from your Stark agent. Some scams email fraudulent phone numbers or have impersonators call to request information.

It's scary but true. Today's hackers are sophisticated and have advanced their efforts to appear authentic by using falsified caller IDs, emails with one small letter changed and many other tactics. What hackers can't duplicate is the human connection of personal relationships. When in doubt, pick up the phone. Connect voice-to-voice or face-to-face with the local people you know, like and trust. Use those connections and your closing day will be one of celebration.