Rental Scams

The Guelph Police Service - Fraud Unit would like to remind those looking to rent or those who have posted a property for rent to take extra care to protect themselves from becoming the victim of an online Rental Scams.

Whether you are renting the property or looking to rent – DEAL IN PERSON and NOT through EMAIL.

Rental scams can vary, but here are three common scenarios:

1. A fraudster poses as a landlord on a website such as Kijiji or Craigslist and requests that the deposit is wired to them because they are currently out of the province or county. Once the money is paid, the victim discovers that the rental unit doesn’t exist.

2. A fraudster copies an existing rental ad from a website such as Kijiji or Craigslist and poses as the landlord. They request a deposit be wired to them (because they are currently out of the province or county) and the victim will be sent keys. Once the money is paid, the victim discovers that the keys don’t work and the Unit was not legitimately rented to them.

3. A fraudster poses as a tenant and responds to an internet advertisement. Again, they are out of the province or country. They send a cheque or bank draft for an amount in excess of the deposit required with instructions to wire back the overpayment. DO NOT WIRE money back to someone who has paid in this manner. The method of payment will turn out to be fraudulent and you will be out the money.

Tips:

* Be very cautious when dealing with someone you only contact with via phone and/or Internet. DEAL IN PERSON.

* Never wire transfer funds (e.g. Western Union or Money Gram)

* Beware of fake cheques and money orders

* Never give out your financial information

* Do not rent or purchase sight-unseen properties

* Refuse background/credit checks until you have met the landlord in person

* Excess payments. Never wire or transfer excess funds to anyone.

* Be extra cautious during Rental Season. Fraud becomes more prevalent at the beginning and end of university or college terms.
If you believe you have identified a fraudulent ad, please contact the website to express your concerns and have it removed.

If you suspect that you were subject to a fraudulent transaction attempt, please contact the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre @ www.antifraudcentre.ca.

If you have lost money in such a scam, please contact the Guelph Police Service – Fraud Unit.