

Personal Security Series

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Non-Delivery of Merchandise

Living in a world in which we are consistently connected, sharing our information (both knowingly and unknowingly) and instant gratification for those answers, or help, we seek, has made our vulnerability volatile. This series will deal with heightening our awareness on fraudulent behaviors. The information was provided directly from the Federal Bureau of Investigation website, <https://www.fbi.gov/scams-and-safety/common-fraud-schemes>. I have copied much of the information directly from this website. It does not provide attributes to any specific author(s).

The FBI indicates that seniors are especially vulnerable to these schemes. Seniors tend to have more money, making them better targets. Most seniors are trusting and polite. They are less likely to report a fraud because they are embarrassed they were scammed, do not realize they were scammed until well after or just don't know how to go about reporting a scam. Seniors also are more susceptible to promises that can make their retirement years more "Golden" and are easy victims to those false promises.

I must say it is depressing to see and hear about all the scams that exist out there. Seniors are not the only prey out there. These con artists come up with ingenious ways to get your guard down and cause you to react without thinking.

Non-delivery of merchandise is a scheme most often linked to Internet auction fraud, in which a seller on an Internet auction website accepts payment for an item yet intentionally fails to ship it. Sellers like these sometimes will relist the item and attempt to sell it again through a different username.

Non-delivery of merchandise can also be considered a form of business fraud in a number of cases. For example, some web-based international companies advertise in the U.S. for affiliate opportunities, offering individuals the chance to sell high-end electronic items, such as plasma television sets and home theater systems, at significantly reduced prices. When these items sell and the funds are forwarded to the companies from their affiliates, the items fail to ship to the individuals who sold them and thus never make it to their respective buyers.

Tips for Avoiding Non-Delivery of Merchandise:

- Make sure you are purchasing merchandise from a reputable source.
- Do your homework on the individual or company to ensure that they are legitimate.
- Obtain a physical address rather than simply a post office box and a telephone number, and call the seller to see if the telephone number is correct and working.
- Send an e-mail to the seller to make sure the e-mail address is active, and be wary of those that utilize free e-mail services where a credit card wasn't required to open the account.
- Consider not purchasing from sellers who won't provide you with this type of information.
- Check with the Better Business Bureau from the seller's area.
- Check out other websites regarding this person/company.
- Don't judge a person or company by their website; flashy websites can be set up quickly.
- Be cautious when responding to special investment offers, especially through unsolicited e-mail.
- Be cautious when dealing with individuals/companies from outside your own country.
- Inquire about returns and warranties.

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- If possible, purchase items online using your credit card, because you can often dispute the charges if something goes wrong.
- Make sure the transaction is secure when you electronically send your credit card numbers.
- Consider using an alternate payment service.

The real message here is to stay on our guard. I felt as I prepared for this series that it is only a matter of time before I become susceptible to any of these. There are many innovative crooks out there and some may exist in our own families. I don't mean these newsletters to be scary, but it's current life in the USA. Unfortunately, with the internet and little tracing, it's hard to get and convict the scoundrels. We hear too often of those that have been affected by fraudulent dealings and hope that writing and distributing information on it may help you become more aware of these scams so that if you are ever in this type of situation, a red flag will come up and cause to KEEP YOUR GUARD UP!

Our comprehensive program at Edu4Retirement, Inc. is designed to teach people about retirement and the various issues that confront each person as they make their solo journey into retirement. To obtain copies of other series, visit our website at <http://www.edu4retirement.com/p/newsletters>.

We are forever learning as we go through this process, since family dynamics, personal desires and amounts involved can be infinitely different. However, the patterns we see in personal behavior and decisions of our clients make our experience very helpful to most.

Michael Callahan and Steve Tillona are available for any questions that may arise as you make this journey. You may contact us at:

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