

## **It's No "Accident"**

*After failing to sell your bike through a local newspaper ad, you place an advertisement for your barely used, 1980 Harley-Davidson on a specialized web site. Just hours after placing the ad, you are contacted by a buyer claiming to specialize in purchasing quality used bikes to resell to collectors.*

*Everything appears legitimate. You even receive a cashier's check overnight. The only problem is that the check is written for \$5,000 over the sale price. The buyer explains that there was some error and advises you to deposit the check and refund the overpayment using a money transfer service. In good faith, you transfer the overpayment and ship the merchandise.*

*Just over a week later, your bank informs you the check was fraudulent and, therefore, no funds have been deposited into your account. Unfortunately, the Harley-Davidson has already been sent, along with \$5,000 in cash, leaving you without the bike, without the cash and without recourse.*

### **Over-payment scam**

This scam involves someone offering to buy an item you might be selling – usually a high-ticket item such as a motorcycle, a car or some type of specialized equipment. For some contrived reason, the buyer pays more than the asking price, often claiming that the over-payment was an accident or that it must be paid to a third party shipping agent. The scam is in the payment – typically a fraudulent cashier's check or money order.

The plan is to get you to send the difference before you realize that the check is a fraud. Because some banks will allow funds to be drawn before an item has cleared, you might not learn of the fraud until it is too late. When the payment is determined to be a fraud, the funds are withdrawn from your account. In this type of scam, you could possibly lose not only the amount of the "over-payment," but also the item you were selling.

If you suspect an over-payment scam, please review the following tips before sending a money transfer transaction:

1. Remember, Western Union does not recommend using a money transfer service to send funds to someone you don't know.
2. Be wary of a buyer who is anxious to complete a transaction immediately. Most buyers will spend time asking questions and negotiating a price.
3. Check with your bank to find out how long it will take the check to clear. Remember, just because the bank has given you access to the funds, it does not mean the check has fully cleared.
4. Wait until the check has cleared before sending the amount of the over-payment.
5. Remember the old adage: If a deal sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

Western Union takes consumer fraud very seriously. We value our consumers and know that they work hard for their money. If they lose by becoming the victim of fraud, we feel like we lose too. That's why we're working to create greater awareness of the various types of consumer fraud. If you feel you have been the victim of fraud, please contact your Attorney General and/or local law enforcement.

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