

AVOIDING JOB SCAMS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Disclaimer

Although we strive to review and verify the legitimacy of organizations recruiting TU students, Towson University acts only as an intermediary between employers posting opportunities and candidates searching for opportunities. Towson University does not verify the authenticity or legitimacy of the positions that are posted. The ultimate responsibility for researching a potential employer and opportunity lies with the applicant. Towson University has no control over and takes no responsibility for (a) the truthfulness, accuracy, quality, safety, morality, desirability or legality of employer information and position listings, (b) the ability of employers to offer job opportunities, or (c) the hiring, recruiting or other practices of any employer.

If you suspect a position is fraudulent, please contact the Towson University Career Center. If you believe you are the victim of fraud resulting from a job listing, please contact the police, as well.

Evaluating Job Postings

Wondering if a job posting is a scam or not? If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. It is very important for you to educate yourself about potential scams. Here are some good tips that the job is probably fraudulent:

- You are asked to send/wire/transfer money (cash, check, money order, etc.) to/for the “employer.” NEVER SEND ANYONE MONEY THAT HAS OFFERED YOU WORK OF ANY KIND, even if they sent you a check which you deposited, the check could be fake.
- If you are asked to reship packages (you could be liable for receiving/distributing stolen property).
- The promise of a large salary for very little work.
- Positions that ask you to give credit card or bank account numbers, or copies of personal documents.
- Jobs that ask for an initial investment and/or for you to send payment by wire service or courier.
- Positions in which you are offered a large payment or reward in exchange for allowing the use of your bank account - often for depositing checks or transferring money.
- While there are legitimate opportunities for individuals to work from home, be sure to research the position (Envelope Stuffers, Home-based Assembly Jobs, Online Surveys) in advance of applying.
- The contact email address contains the domain @live.com.
- The posting includes many spelling and grammatical errors.
- The position initially appears as a traditional job but upon further research, it sounds more like an independent contractor opportunity.
- You receive an unexpectedly large check (checks are typically slightly less than \$500, generally sent or deposited on Fridays).
- You are asked to provide a photo of yourself.
- The posting neglects to mention what the responsibilities of the job actually are. Instead, the description focuses on the amount of money to be made.
- The employer responds to you immediately after you submit your resume. Typically, resumes sent to an employer are reviewed by multiple individuals, or not viewed until the posting has closed. Note: This does not include an auto-response you may receive from the employer once you have sent your resume.
- The employer offers employment without an interview.

- The position indicates a first year compensation that is in high excess to the average compensation for that position type.
- Look at the company's website. Does it have an index that tells you what the site is about or does it contain information only about the job you are interested in? Scammers often create quick, basic web pages that seem legitimate at first glance.
- Watch for anonymity. If it is difficult to find an address, actual contact, company name, etc., this is cause to proceed with caution. Fraud postings are illegal, so scammers will try to keep themselves well-hidden.
- The salary range listed is very wide (i.e., "employees can earn from \$40K - \$80K the first year!") When you Google the company name and the word "scam" (i.e., "Acme Company scam"), the results show several scam reports concerning this company.
- Google the employer's phone number, fax number and/or email address. If it does not appear connected to an actual business organization, this is a red flag.
- Other sources to research organizations include the Better Business Bureau (<http://www.bbb.org/us/consumers>), Hoovers (<http://www.hoovers.com>) and AT&T's Anywho (<http://www.anywho.com>).
- The employer contacts you by phone, however there is no way to call them back. The number is not available.
- The employer tells you that they do not have an office set-up in your area, and will need you to help them get it up and running (these postings often include a request for your banking information, supposedly to help the employer make transactions).

Check out these links for additional advice and tips on determining whether the job, opportunity and/or company you're applying for is legitimate:

- Job Hunting/Job Scams (Federal Trade Commission): <http://ftc.gov/jobscams>
- Avoiding Online Job Scams: <https://www.privacyrights.org/fs/fs25a-JobSeekerPriv2.htm>
- Tips for Job Seekers to Avoid Job Scams: <http://www.worldprivacyforum.org/jobscamtipsforwarding.html>
- Is This Job Real? What Should I Do If I Applied?: <http://www.rileyguide.com/realjob.html>
- Avoiding Job and Work at Home Scams: <http://jobsearch.about.com/cs/workathomehelp/a/homescam.htm>
- Postal Money Order Security: <https://postalinspectors.uspis.gov/radDocs/consumer/maoalert.htm>