



FRAUD ALERT

Use Cashier's Checks. Only wire money as a last resort. If you wire money, call a known phone number first to verify the wire instructions.

Wire fraud in real estate transactions has become a national epidemic. Criminals are hacking into the email accounts of real estate brokers and escrow officers and duping buyers into sending earnest money, down payment or funds to close directly to the criminals via wire transfer. The hacker emails are often sent directly from the broker or escrow officer's own email account so they look just like the broker or escrow officer's actual email. The hacker usually sends wire instructions to the buyer requesting deposit of earnest money, down payment or funds to close. The buyer then unwittingly wires funds in accordance with the hacker provided wire instructions and the funds are sent directly to the hacker's own account, which is cleared-out in a matter of minutes.

Buyers and sellers need to be on alert whenever they are asked to send money to avoid becoming a victim of fraud. It is your loss if you wire money into a fraudulent account. The following best practices are strongly recommended to minimize the risk of becoming a victim:

- Deliver funds to the escrow agent or title company via cashier's check rather than wire transfer.
- If you must wire money, always call the intended recipient (usually an escrow agent or title company) at a known telephone number to verify the wire instructions.
- Do not trust contact information in emails, even emails that appear to be legitimate. The hackers will recreate legitimate looking signature blocks with their own telephone number and contact information. In addition, the hackers often include links to fake websites to further convince the victims of their legitimacy.
- Never click on any links in an unverified email. These links can lead to fake websites and sometimes contain viruses that make your computer – and your transaction – vulnerable to attack.
- If you receive a suspicious email, call or text the sender at a known number to confirm they sent the email.
- Never trust revised or changed wire instructions. It is very rare for a title company or escrow agent to change wire instructions.

Received and acknowledged by:

Buyer/Seller Date

Buyer/Seller Date