



Connecticut BBB Raises Red Flags About Online Job Searches

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Identity Thieves and Scammers Take Advantage of job Seekers

PR9.NET June 06, 2008 - Wallingford, CT - As the summer job search begins, Connecticut Better Business Bureau is warning job-seekers about fraud and identity theft in the most popular method of looking for employment: The Internet. According to The Conference Board, the world's preeminent business membership and research organization, three out of four people said they use the Internet as their key job-seeking tool.

According to Connecticut Better Business Bureau President Paulette Hotton, complaints about online job searching, including work at home scams advertised online, are just the proverbial tip of iceberg.

"We expect instances of online job search fraud will continue to grow in coming months because of the tight job market and rising unemployment. Unfortunately, this problem targets some of the most vulnerable people, those who are out of work."

Connecticut Better Business Bureau offers the following advice on how to identify the seven red flags when looking for work online:

Red Flag Employer e-mails are rife with grammatical and spelling errors. Most online fraud is perpetrated by scammers located outside the U.S. Their first language usually isn't English and this is often evident in their poor grasp of the language which can include poor grammar and the misspelling of common words.

Red Flag E-mails purporting to be from job posting Web sites claiming there's a problem with a job hunter's account: After creating a user account on sites like monster.com or careerbuilder.com, a job hunter might receive an e-mail saying there has been a problem with their account or they need to follow a hyperlink to install new software. Phishing e-mails like this are designed to convince readers to click a link within the message to fix the issue, but actually take them to a Web site that will install malware or viruses on their computer.

Red Flag An employer asks for extensive personal information such as social security or bank account numbers: Some job seekers have been surprised to learn they've gotten a job without having to do a single interview. However, when the employer then asked for personal information in order to fill out the necessary paperwork suspicions were raised – and rightly so. Regardless of the reason or excuse given by the employer, a job applicant should never give out his or her Social Security or bank account numbers over the phone or e-mail.

Red Flag An employer offers the opportunity to become rich without leaving home: While there are legitimate businesses that allow employees to work from home, there are also a lot of scammers trying to take advantage of senior citizens, stay-at-home moms, students and injured or handicapped people looking to make money at home. Job hunters should use extreme caution when considering a work-at-home offer and always research the company with their BBB.

Red Flag An employer asks for money up front: Aside from paying for a uniform, it is rarely advisable for an applicant to pay upfront fees or make a required purchase to get a job. Most recently, the BBB of Metropolitan Dallas uncovered a scam where job hunters were told they had to pay \$64.50 for a background check before they could be considered for a cleaning job. Predictably, after paying for the background check, the job seeker never heard from the company again.

Red Flag The salary and benefits offered seem too-good-to-be-true: The adage holds true for job offers: if the deal sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Phony employers might brag about exceptionally high salary potential and excellent benefits for little experience in order to lure unsuspecting job hunters into their scam.

Red Flag The job requires the employee to wire money through Western Union or MoneyGram:

Many phony jobs require the prospective employee to cash a check sent by the company through the mail and then wire a portion of the money on to another entity. Reasons given for this requirement vary from scam to scam. Whatever the reason though, the check might clear the employee's bank account but will eventually turn out to be a fake and the employee is out the money he or she wired back to the scammers.

For more reliable advice on job searching and for what to do if a job hunter becomes a victim of ID theft or fraud related to a job opportunity, please visit our web site, <http://www.bbb.org>.

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About Better Business Bureau Connecticut

Founded in 1912, BBB is an unbiased non-profit organization that sets and upholds high standards for fair and honest business behavior. BBB offers objective advice and a wide range of education on topics affecting marketplace trust. BBB also offers complaint and dispute resolution support for consumers and businesses. Today, 128 BBBs serve communities across the U.S. and Canada, evaluating and monitoring more than three million local and national businesses and charities. For more advice on finding companies

and businesses, start your search with trust at www.bbb.org.

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