

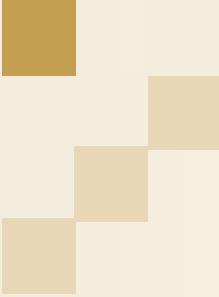


NEW YORK STATE CONSUMER PROTECTION BOARD HOW TO AVOID EMPLOYMENT SCAMS IN NEW YORK STATE FACT SHEET

In these challenging economic times, some people attempt to capitalize on the strong desire for employment and income in different populations or communities. Victims are targeted at job fairs, online, through telephone solicitations, and through radio, print and television advertisements. Get-rich-quick schemes, work-at-home scams, pyramid schemes, and numerous other approaches promising employment and wealth are used to separate job seekers from their money.

The following are tips and suggestions on how to avoid becoming a victim of an employment scam.

- **Remember the adage, “If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.”** Many fraudulent job or business offers promise ideal work environments, high pay, and require little or no experience. Most offers promising the best of all worlds turn out to be a waste of time and money.
- **Be suspicious of employment-service firms that guarantee finding you a job.**
- **Use caution when contacting entities promoting “previously undisclosed” federal government jobs.** All federal positions are announced to the public.
- **Avoid high pressure tactics that stress paying immediately or risk missing an employment opportunity.** If an employment opportunity is truly valid, it should not require any form of payment and you should be given time to review the offer.
- **Be aware that some ads may appear to announce a job opportunity, however, it is really an ad selling employment information and services.**
- **Be Wary of Potential Employers who:**
 - Want personal information, such as your Social Security number or financial information, prior to an interview
 - Offer to hire you without an interview or meeting
 - Charge up-front placement fees or other charges as a condition of your employment
 - Ask you to transfer, receive and/or deposit money or receive/send packages (especially from outside the United States)
 - Do not provide a job description or cannot describe the position for which you are inquiring



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- **Note possible financial repercussions when dialing a toll-free number.** Some employment ads require the responder to dial a toll-free number to obtain more information. Once connected, you may be unwittingly switched to a pay-per-call number, or asked to call a 900-number without proper fee disclosures. Both of these practices violate federal law. The Federal Trade (FTC) Commission and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) both have enforcement power. To file a complaint regarding a 900-number, call 1-877-FTC-HELP, or 1-888-CALL-FCC.
- **Cautiously surf the Internet for employment.** The Internet can provide numerous avenues for job seekers. It affords the user countless opportunities to view openings on actual company websites, online job sites (such as Carrerbuilder.com and Monstor.com), newspaper classified webpages, and social networking sites. Take precautions if you are thinking about applying for jobs that contain the following information and/or requests:
 - Personal invitations claiming to match your resume skills with a job. Scammers often send mass e-mails in an attempt to gather personal information. If you receive such an e-mail, ask yourself if you sent a resume to this recruiter, or if you applied for a job with the alleged company? You should also contact the company directly and inquire about the position and/or e-mail.
 - Requests for identity verification. Some scammers will contact a job seeker stating they need identity verification prior to granting an interview. They may ask for information such as a Social Security or drivers license number, mother's maiden name, etc. These requests are aimed at trying to steal your identity.
- **Use secure and reputable sites to post your resume.** You may want to create a dedicated e-mail address to accept replies to your posted career inquiries.
- **Take time to review contracts from employment firms.** Before signing any agreement or contract, make sure you understand the terms to which you are agreeing. Additionally, be aware of what services will be provided by the firm and for what you will be responsible. If oral promises do not appear in the agreement/contract, reconsider doing business with that firm, or have such promises incorporated into the agreement or contract.

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Employment Agency Law:

Under the New York State General Business Law Sections 170-194, employment agencies are required to be licensed by the New York State Department of Labor. (In New York City, licensing is handled by the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs.)

Employment agencies that charge a fee only to the employer are not required to be licensed under New York State Law.

Licensed employment agencies are required to provide to each applicant for employment the following:

- A copy of the contract, which includes statements of the law regarding conditions under which the employment agency is entitled to a fee and the circumstances under which any fees collected, must be returned.
- A receipt stating the amount and purpose of any fee, deposit, or payment that the agency collects.
- The name and address of the person to whom you are to apply for employment.
- The anticipated rate of wages.
- The agency's fee.
- Whether such employment is temporary or permanent.
- The name and address of the person authorizing your hiring.
- The cost of transportation if the services are required outside the city where the agency is located.

References:

Better Business Bureau (BBB) – *Beware of Employment Scams and Use Caution When Seeking Employment Online*
EmploymentGuide.com – *Tips to avoid employment scams during your job search*
Federal Trade Commission – *FTC Facts for Consumers: Help Wanted....finding A Job*
New York State General Business Law (Article 11) Sections 170-194.



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