



Work-at-Home Scam (04/2010) – When the economy is down, people naturally lean toward “get rich quick” schemes. As such, these schemes have become more advanced and popular throughout the years. Today, one of the biggest “get rich quick” schemes is the work-at-home scam. This scam not only promises quick money, but that you can work from the convenience of your home and at your own pace and schedule. However, there is always a catch, whether that you have to buy overpriced starter kits, attend expensive classes, or pay fees and hidden costs.

Warning Signs of a Work-at-Home Scam:

- You don’t get paid until the work is and determined to meet a vague standard. This type of scheme allows the person in charge of payment to say that your work was substandard and then you never get paid.
- Hidden costs and extra fees. Starter kits, and supply costs could be expensive and overpriced, eventually costing you more money than what you get paid.
- Unrealistic time estimates for job completion. Jobs could take much more time than advertised, this would reduce the time you have available to do other jobs.
- A request for your credit card information. Legitimate jobs seldom ask for or require your credit card information. This usually is a red flag that it might be a scam. Once scammers they have this number, scammers can make fraudulent or reoccurring charges to your credit card.
- Use of well-known company logos. Often a well-known and reputable company name or logo will be used to support or endorse the work-at-home company. Always check into claims made by the work-at-home company. Do not believe whatever you read, see, or are told simply because it references a company name or logo you know or trust.
- Unsolicited offers. Always be careful when you receive an unsolicited job offer. Often vague and sounding too good to be true, the unsolicited offers are most likely a scam or fraud.

To help avoid becoming a victim of a work-at-home scheme it is important to be informed. Also remember to ask pointed questions and demand detailed answers in writing. The questions may include: What does the job specifically require? How much will I get paid and how often am I paid? Is there any documentation to prove the claims being made? What is my total cost to participate in this program? How many hours a week will I have to work?

Another way to protect yourself is to check with the Better Business Bureau or your state’s Attorney General to see if there have been any complaints about the company. However, be aware that even if there are no documented complaints, it doesn’t mean that this is a legitimate company. There are always ways to hide previous bad practices.

If you feel you may be a victim of this type of scam, contact the Federal Trade Commission at <http://www.ftc.gov/complaint> or 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357).