



CHRISTIANSBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT

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*******FOR IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE*******

Christiansburg Police Warn Local Businesses of Scam

Date: August 8, 2012

The Christiansburg Police Department warns of a new scam affecting surrounding jurisdictions and local businesses.

In this scam, someone calls a business and places a large order for a product. They say they are using a shipper from Ghana, Africa. The buyer wants to pay the shipping cost to the business and then have the business pay the shipper directly. The business will then wire the money to the shipper in Africa. The scammers have a very real, legitimate looking website.

Once the transaction is completed, it is realized that the credit card the buyer made the order with is stolen. The cash that the business sent through Western Union to Africa is unrecoverable and the business loses that money.

It takes about ten minutes for a Western Union transaction to go through their computer. Once it is complete, the money can be picked up anywhere in the world. This timeframe is usually too short to realize the scam and stop the transaction. It is simply impossible to track the money to be refunded. **Businesses should be cautioned about sending cash orders through money gram services, even if they claim to be in the USA.**

Businesses should also be aware that numbers can easily be spoofed to look like local numbers, or they may be prepaid phones which can be virtually impossible to trace and can be opened using false information.

TIPS:

- 1) Use **extreme caution** when asked to ship outside the U.S. If you have any questions about whether the transaction is legit, it probably is not.
- 2) Any transaction involving Western Union or any other type of money gram service should immediately be a "red flag."

If you have any questions about this scam, please contact the Police Department at (540) 382-3131.

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