

Avoiding Employment Scams

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



Contents

1. How Not to Be Scammed.....	2
2. Fake Online Job Ads	3
3. Paying for Training or Employment Search.....	6
4. Being asked for Personal Information	7
5. Employment Standards	8
6. Additional Resources.....	9

1. How Not to Be Scammed

Introduction

When looking for work it is important to be aware of the types of job and employment scams that exist. Scams often promise a lot of income for little or no effort. Or they ask that you pay for training or materials before providing employment.

There are many ways people can try to scam you into providing financial or personal information by fraudulent means. Popular scams can come to you by email sent by people you don't know. Employment scams are also posted on websites such as Craigslist, and on other well-known job sites. Employers may also try to take advantage of people who are not familiar with local employment standards by making illegal deductions from pay or forcing unpaid overtime work.

Tip:

- *In most cases, if a job offer or business opportunity seems too good to be true, it usually is.*

This guide offers you strategies on how to avoid scams and protect yourself when looking for work.

2. Fake Online Job Ads

Many online job sites (especially free sites like Craigslist) are popular forums for scammers. Scam job posts are often found in the part-time or entry-level job categories, but can exist for all types of jobs. Popular scams often promise high income for little experience or the ability to work from home.

The scam postings may list jobs which don't exist. You are then directed to fee-based services or sites where you are instructed to enter personal information that is used for identity theft.

If a position or job offer seems to be too good to be true, proceed with extreme caution.

Some Online Job Scam Warning Signs

- You're offered a job without an application or interview
- The company asks you to wire money or asks for your credit card information.
- You are promised high pay for not much work
- The company asks you to pay for a credit report as part of the application process or to pay for training
- You receive a quick response to your email inquiry that tells you they have reviewed your resume when you didn't even send it
- There is no job contact information. A real job post will provide a contact email or give you a valid company website
- You receive a response to your email from someone in a foreign country looking to hire people in Canada to handle accounts payable or receivables

Tips for avoiding online job scams:

- Check the company name, the address to send a resume to, the email address, or the phone number, through a search engine and add the word “scam”.
- Do your homework by checking websites and doing a search of the company before responding. Research the company to see if they are legitimate and get as much contact information as you can including the employer’s name, address, phone number, website and email address. Try searching the company in LinkedIn (<https://ca.linkedin.com/>) to find existing employees in the organization
- Watch out for Phishing: phishing refers to emails and websites designed to look like they come from well-known and trusted businesses in an attempt to collect personal or financial information. Be extremely cautious when responding to unsolicited e-mails from supposed employers—even if the company name is well-known. Never click on any link or submit any information on a website you’ve been sent by email. These links can lead to websites that look legitimate but are run by scammers.

You can research companies through sources like the Better Business Bureau, and other business directories. Some sources to try:

- **Better Business Bureau. Mainland British Columbia**
<https://www.bbb.org/local-bbb/bbb-of-mainland-bc>
- **Reference Canada**
<https://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/reference-canada>

NOTE: You can access this database from a Library computer. If you are using a computer from outside the Library, you will need a Vancouver Public Library card to login to this database. After clicking on the database name, you will be asked to enter your library card number and PIN (usually last four digits of your telephone number).

You can also try sending them an email or phone the company to check if the company is what it claims to be. Ask to speak to the relevant contact person or Human Resources staff member about the advertised job.

More information about online job scams at:

- **Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre**
<https://www.antifraudcentre-centreantifraude.ca/scams-fraudes/job-emploi-eng.htm>
- **Job and Employment Scams. Competition Bureau Canada**
<https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/competition-bureau-canada/en/fraud-and-scams/tips-and-advice/job-and-employment-scams>
- **Craigslist. About Scams**
<https://www.craigslist.org/about/scams>
- **ClickLaw: Work Scams**
https://wiki.clicklaw.bc.ca/index.php?title=Work_Scams
- **Different Kinds of Employment Scams and How to Avoid Them. Indeed.com**
<https://ca.indeed.com/career-advice/finding-a-job/job-scams>
- **Online Employment Scams. Edmonton Police Service**
<https://www.edmontonpolice.ca/CrimePrevention/PersonalFamilySafety/Frauds/OnlineScams/EmploymentScams>

3. Paying for Training or Employment Search

Watch out for employers that try to make you pay fees to get a job. No real employer or employment agency should ask you to pay a fee before you start working.

Beware of employers who ask you to pay for the following services as a condition of employment:

- specialized job training in exchange for 'guaranteed' employment
- prepayment for materials or supplies
- background or credit checks
- application processing fees
- transportation costs

Also beware of emails or calls from so-called employment agencies telling you they have been asked by an employer to "screen" you for a particular job.

These agencies may pressure you to sign a contract and pay an administration fee for their job placement service. You might never hear from the company again, or will be given a list of referral companies that have never heard of the phoney agency and have no work to offer.

Examples of specific scams available at:

- **Common Job Scams – University of Calgary Career Services**
<https://www.ucalgary.ca/student-services/careers/students/browse-online-resources/job-scams>
- **15 Common Job Search Scams and How to Protect Yourself. FlexJobs**
<https://www.flexjobs.com/blog/post/common-job-search-scams-how-to-protect-yourself-v2/>

4. Being asked for Personal Information

If you feel uncomfortable with some of the information requested either decline or proceed with extreme caution. Real employment ads will not ask for any banking or personal information or for any money deposits.

Do not provide personal information in your résumé, on application forms, or other online job sites including:

- Your Social Insurance Number
- Your age, marital status, date of birth
- Your driver's license number
- Your health card number
- Your banking or financial information, which includes credit card or bank account numbers and any Personal Identification Numbers (PIN)

Tips:

- Certain information may be discussed with a prospective employer only *after the hiring process has begun*.
- It is advised that you don't give personal information to anyone unless you've been offered a job in writing and receive a copy of the contract.

Some general rules for financial safety:

- Do not agree to have funds or pay cheques direct deposited into any of your accounts by a new employer – you should know them first.
- Do not transfer, send by courier, or "wire" any money to any employer using your personal accounts
- Do not transfer money and retain a portion for payment.

More information at:

- **Job Search Safety Advice. Service Canada**
<https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/findajob/resources/safety-tips>
- **Schemes and Scams. RBC**
<https://www.rbc.com/privacysecurity/ca/protecting-yourself.html#scemes-scams>

5. Employment Standards

Most occupations in B.C. are covered under the Employment Standards Act of British Columbia. Some occupations are covered under the Canadian Labour Code instead.

Both the B.C. Employment Standards Act and the Canadian Labour Code set out a minimum standard for employment and workplace safety that employers and employees must follow. These standards include wages, overtime, breaks, vacation leave, wage deductions, and more.

For more details on the Employment Standards Act see:

- Employment Standards Branch
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/employment-standards-advice/employment-standards>

All workers have a right to a safe and healthy workplace. You also have the right to refuse work that you feel is dangerous.

For more information about workplace safety see:

- **Working in BC. Welcome BC**
<https://www.welcomebc.ca/Work-in-B-C/Working-in-B-C>
- **WorkSafe BC**
<https://www.worksafebc.com/>

6. Additional Resources

Still looking for more information? Try looking at the following resources:

- ***Work at Home: the No-nonsense Guide to Avoiding Scams and Generating Real Income from Anywhere!*** / Caitlin Pyle. 2019. 658.9 Z11P99w
- ***Scam Me if you Can: Simple Strategies to Outsmart Today's Rip-off Artists*** / Frank W. Abagnale. 2019. 364.163 A11sm
- ***Find a Job Through Social Networking: Use LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Blogs and More to Advance your Career*** / Diane Crompton and Ellen Sautter. 2011. Central Library, Level 4. 650.13 S26s1
- ***Creating and Protecting Your Online Identity for Job Search: A Guide for Newcomers to British Columbia***
<https://www.vpl.ca/siic/guide/job-search-resources/creating-and-protecting-your-online-identity>

Questions? Please ask the Information Staff on Level 4, Central Library or telephone.

Please note that the information in this guide is also available online through the Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre website at <https://www.vpl.ca/siic>