

# Doron F. Eghbali Consumer Fraud Law

## How to Avoid Scammers

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Difficult economic conditions have caused scammers to have more success in ensnaring the unwary.

In fact, according to Council of Better Business Bureaus, people in financial straits were the most likely victims of scam artists in the past year.

### LEARNING FROM MISTAKES

These are some of the most common scams devised by con artists.

- **Bogus Job Offers:** Job seekers were told the prospective employer would have to check their credit report. Instead, the job seekers were signed up for credit-monitoring services without their knowledge and were charged to their credit cards monthly.
- **Debt-Assistance Scams:** In most instances, consumers paid in advance to scammers to negotiate their debt. However, the scammers disappeared.
- **Federal Stimulus Scams:** Many businesses or consumers vying for a share of the federal stimulus pit were trapped by scammers. The con artists would set up a phony internet site and would ask for credit card and bank account information of consumers.

Note, the Better Business Bureau is not a regulatory agency. However, consumers could file their complaints with it.

### SAFETY TIPS

- **Think twice about Too Good to Be True Job Offers:** Be extremely skeptical of job offers that you can do from home a few days a week and still make lots of money. In fact, it is too good to be true.
- **Educate Yourself on Offers:** Read the fine print, especially if you are offered a free trial.
- **Safeguard Your Money with Vigilance:** Never wire transfer your money or give out your credit card information to people you do not know. Rely on your instincts. Ask probing questions and ask yourself whether what they tell you make sense.
- **Have The Terms of Offer in Writing:** Do not trust verbal offers. You should have what you hear in simple language you can understand in writing.
- **Think Twice About Lottery Winnings or Government Grants:** Consider seriously whether you could have won a lottery ticket. Consider seriously whether the government would send you free money in the form of grants even without you applying for it.

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