



SCAM  
ALERT

## SELLING ITEMS ONLINE

During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, many people are selling items online. Scam predators are looking for opportunities to take advantage by obtaining your funds and personal information by contacting you with interest in the item you are selling. They typically offer more than your asking price using a variety of reasons including that this particular item is special to them or simply because you are so helpful. They may also send you a check or electronic payment for more than the agreed upon price and claim it was a mistake. What happens next is predictable - the scam predator requests the extra money back, and once you return the funds, you will find the check bounces or the electronic payment is denied.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and Better Business Bureau (BBB) recommend the following to protect yourself from this type of scam predator:

- ▶ **Never** ship an item before you receive a legitimate payment. If you ship before they pay, you have no way to get your item back.
- ▶ **Watch** for red flags. Unless you are selling a rare or highly desirable item that people are bidding on, you should not expect more than your asking price.
- ▶ **Look out** for counterfeit emails. Scam predators are skilled at impersonating popular payment services like PayPal or Venmo. Read the email carefully. Verify the sender address and watch for typos and grammatical errors.
- ▶ **Report** suspicious activity to the online marketplace where your item is listed.

**Note:** You may report scam predators to the FTC, BBB, Adult Protective Services (APS), Office of the Inspector General and the Federal Bureau of Investigation Internet Crime Complaint Center.

If you think you may be a victim of a scam, contact  
**San Bernardino County APS at 1 (877) 565-2020**  
or your local police department.