



City of Cambridge Police Department

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COMMUNITY INFO: CPD Warns Residents about Craigslist Rental Property Scams

June 11, 2011 – The Cambridge Police Department Criminal Investigations Section has seen an increase in the amount of rental property scams that are seen daily on popular websites like Craigslist, Zillow, and other rental property sites. The scams will advertise a property in Cambridge for rent, at usually a lower than normal price.

Upon conversing with the person via email, they will inform the person that they are overseas or away from the property and were unable to rent the property prior to leaving, and have to conduct the rental process remotely. Upon completing a rental application, the scammer will ask the individual to wire rent via Western Union or MoneyGram, and they will ship the key to the property via FedEx or UPS. The renter never receives a key to the property and loses the money that was wired.

The properties that are being “rented” are generally properties that are for sale, and the photos have been taken from a Real Estate website.

Recommendations to protect yourself if you are looking to rent a property in Cambridge include the following:

- Meet with the property owner or a rental agent at the property location.
- Do not rent a property without being able to have access to the inside of the house.
- Think twice before you wire funds via Western Union or MoneyGram.

PLEASE ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO
Dan Riviello, Communications Specialist, Cambridge Police Department
driviello@cambridgepolice.org or 617-349-3237

With an increase in the number of individuals who are looking to rent property here in Cambridge, be vigilant when searching for property online and if a deal is too good to be true, think twice and don't become another victim.

The majority of these scams are being conducted by scammers who reside outside of the United States and are similar to other scams that are prevalent online.

Questions can be directed to Detective Brian O'Connor of the Criminal Investigations Section – Financial & Computer Crimes at 617-349-9307

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