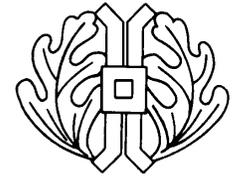


PREVENTIVE LAW SERIES

INTERNET AUCTIONS



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Online Internet auctions allow both buyers and sellers the opportunity to conduct business from their home. Many of us may think that online Internet auctions are a deal, but complaints about fraudulent online Internet auctions are growing at an alarming rate. What follows are a few suggestions to protect yourself from being defrauded.

1. Understand how the online Internet auction operates. Every online internet auction site has their own rules, policies, and procedures so make sure you are aware of the rules of the particular online internet site you are participating in.
2. Spend some time at the online Internet site before you actually start bidding.
3. Research the product that you are bidding on by checking the price of the product with local retailers. Do not assume that you are getting a bargain on an online Internet auction site.
4. Research the seller by contacting the Better Business Bureau.
5. Acquire as much information as possible about the seller, including name, address, and telephone number. Hint: if the address solely consists of a P.O. Box, be cautious about doing business with them.
6. Contact the seller by phone before completing any transaction so as to confirm the details of the transaction, discuss payment, and to discuss shipping methods. Ask the seller about any warranties or guarantees that accompany the product. If there are warranties or guarantees that accompany the product, be sure to get it in **WRITING**.
7. Choose a payment method that can be documented and traces such as credit card or a check.
8. Use a traceable shipping method such as UPS or Federal Express.
9. Insist on shipping insurance. It will cost extra but there will be a remedy if the product is damaged or destroyed during shipping.
10. Keep a log on all conversations, make a hard copy of all e-mails sent, product offerings, and the bidding history.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE APPOINTMENTS

For an appointment to see a legal assistance attorney, please contact the Legal Assistance Office, located in Building 610, Naval Air Station North Island, by telephone at (619) 545-6278.

RESOURCES

Internet Fraud Watch – 1-800-876-7060

San Diego District Attorney – Economic Fraud and Environmental Protection Division – 531-4070

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