



DOR NewsRelease

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Department of Revenue

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DOR issues warning on phony check scam

*Scam involves purchase of items on the web with a phony DOR check;
About thirty fraudulent checks reported this week*

Revenue Commissioner Navjeet K. Bal today warned taxpayers and consumers of a scam the Department has become aware of that encourages consumers to deposit fraudulent checks bearing the name and address of the Massachusetts Department of Revenue.

The setup affects those selling items on advertisement or auction websites like Craigslist. The buyer perpetrating the scam sends a phony DOR check made out to the seller for more than the amount of the item to be bought, and then asks for a real check to be sent in return to cover the difference between the phony check and the sales price of the item.

As a result, the seller winds up depositing a bad check for which they are responsible, sends money to the scammer, and may also have shipped the item before realizing the hoax.

For instance, a seller advertises a coat for sale for \$1,000. The supposed buyer pays for the coat with a phony DOR check of \$2,000 made out to the seller, and then asks the seller to send back a real check for \$1,000.

“These supposed checks from DOR bear no resemblance to real refund checks now being sent to thousands of Massachusetts taxpayers, other than to have the ‘Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Revenue’ name and address on them,” Bal said.

“If you receive a check from DOR for the purchase of items that you are selling either from an advertisement or online auction posting, please immediately contact DOR’s Office of Internal Affairs at 617-626-2130, and do not deposit this bad check,” Bal said.

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