



SELLER IMPERSONATION FRAUD IN REAL ESTATE

Fraudsters are impersonating property owners to illegally sell commercial or residential property. Fraudsters are using the real property owner's Social Security and driver's license numbers in the transaction, as well as legitimate notary credentials, which may be applied without the notary's knowledge. The criminals are highly sophisticated and hard to detect if you are not vigilant.

REALTORS® can be a huge part of the solution if they know the red flags to look for and understand how important their role is.

Property and Seller Red Flags to Watch Out For

- Vacant or non-owner occupied (such as investment, vacation or rental property)
- The owner's mailing address on the tax roll is different than the property address
- Property has no outstanding mortgage or liens
- Property is being listed for a price below market value
- Seller demands a quick sale with a cash buyer & the proceeds to be wired to an out of state or out of the country bank
- Seller refuses to attend closing & claims to be out of the state or country
- Seller is difficult to contact & will only communicate by text or email
- Seller refuses or is unable to complete multi-factor authentication or identity verification
- Seller wants to use their own notary
- Seller has an area code that is unrecognizable or foreign

VERIFY THE SELLER'S IDENTITY

- Get a copy of 2 forms of ID
- Ask questions about the property that are not available in public records
- Conduct additional due diligence as needed

USE PUBLIC RECORDS

- Compare the seller's signature to previously recorded documents
- Compare the sales price to the appraisal, historical sales price, or tax appraisal value

WHERE TO GO FOR FRAUD INFO & REPORTING

- FBI: [ic3.fbi](https://www.fbi.gov)
- Secret Service: [secretservice.gov](https://www.secretservice.gov)
- FTC: [reportfraud.ftc.gov](https://www.ftc.gov/report-fraud)
- Also check with local State law enforcement, Attorney General and/or the Secretary of State for more information & notary violations.