

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Check Scammers Seeking To Defraud VI Residents; Potter Issues Warning

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Lieutenant Governor Osbert E. Potter, who serves as Chairman of the Virgin Islands Banking Board, cautioned through a press release this afternoon all consumers to be on the alert for online job search scams. Mr. Potter said the scammers are targeting Virgin Islands job seekers and offering opportunities for employment, in exchange for payment before obtaining the job.

Giving an example, Mr. Potter said the scammers say they will send the job seeker money or valuables, or they ask to use the job seeker's personal bank account to transfer funds. Some scammers will even send to the job seeker what seems to be an authentic cashier's check or a check written on a known bank or credit union. The job seeker is

instructed to deposit or cash the check, keep some of the money for themselves and send the rest of the money to the scammer via Western Union or MoneyGram. Then, a few days or weeks later, the bank notifies the job seeker that the check is fraudulent. In these instances, the job seeker will be held personally responsible for all of the money on the face of the check if the money is withdrawn and will lose the money sent to the scammer, the release says.

"If you have to pay for the promise of a job, then it is likely a scam. Do not give out your mailing address, cell phone number or any other identifying information to a company that requires you to pay in exchange for a job. Please report any suspicious or questionable emails to the Virgin Islands Police Department or other law enforcement entity immediately," Mr. Potter warned.

For further information, the lieutenant governor said residents should contact the Division of Banking and Insurance at the Office of the Lieutenant Governor on St. Croix at (340) 773-6459 or on St. Thomas/St. John at (340) 774-7166.

Complaints can also be filed with The Federal Trade Commission, the national consumer protection agency at www.ftc.gov.