

Job Seeker Safety: How to Avoid Fake Job Scams

Staffing agencies and recruiters can be invaluable to your job search. Unfortunately, there's a rising number of criminals who offer fake job opportunities and claim to be working for legitimate recruiting firms or staffing agencies. Often these scammers contact job seekers by text, social media sites or email but sometimes they post fake job listings on social media or legitimate job boards like Indeed or LinkedIn. These scammers trick candidates into giving money or sharing personal information for malicious purposes.

Be cautious or walk away from job opportunities with these warning signs:

1. **A message offering you a job you didn't apply for** - A legitimate company won't randomly send you a job offer.
2. **The pay is high for minimal work or qualifications** - Compare the offered salary/hourly wage to similar roles or industry standards. If it sounds too good to be true, it's likely a scam.
3. **Communication is via text, a suspicious LinkedIn profile or a generic email** - Legitimate recruiters do proactively contact potential candidates, but it's usually by email, phone or LinkedIn, not by text or text apps like WhatsApp or Telegram. Check the email address and be wary of emails from generic services like Gmail, Yahoo or Hotmail instead of a company address. And if it's a LinkedIn message, check the sender's profile. If it's recently created, has few posts and minimal contacts, it may be fake.
4. **Job posting is vague, filled with grammatical /spelling errors and may include suspicious links/attachments** - Legitimate job postings provide key details with next to no errors. Avoid clicking unfamiliar links or downloading attachments unknown sources send as part of the recruiting process. They can be phishing attempts or contain malware.
5. **Posting lacks company information** - Look for an official website and contact information. Use platforms like Glassdoor or Indeed to research the company or search for it with the word "scam." Proceed with caution if you find issues.
6. **They want to hire you quickly, without an interview** - Legitimate recruiters/hiring managers take the time to interview and vet job candidates before hiring them.
7. **Recruiter/employer requests money for applying, training, software or other expenses** - Legitimate companies do not ask you to send money directly or through a third-party for these services/items.
8. **Recruiter/employer requests personal information when you apply for the job** - Legitimate companies often ask you to provide your social insurance number, birthdate and banking information BUT only after you receive a job offer.

Sources: Canadian HR Reporter, Recruitment scams: common types, how to spot them, and their impact on business, Dec. 17, 2024. University of Calgary (website), Recruitment Fraud. Mohawk College (website), Identifying and avoiding job scams.