

**From:** Attorney General  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 06, 2010 11:07 AM  
**To:**  
**Subject:** Scam Alert: Fashion Model Rip-Off



ATTORNEY GENERAL'S

# SCAM ALERT

A Consumer Protection Alert from Oregon Attorney General John Kroger

Consumer Protection Hotline: 1-877-877-9392

Online: [www.oregonattorneygeneral.gov](http://www.oregonattorneygeneral.gov)

**NEW!** Look up consumer complaints about businesses online: [www.oregonattorneygeneral.gov/beinformed](http://www.oregonattorneygeneral.gov/beinformed)

Dear ,

Thank you again for joining the [Oregon Scam Alert Network](#). Please feel free to forward this email and encourage your family members, friends and colleagues to join the network too. Together we can fight fraud and help protect Oregonians from falling prey to predatory schemes.

Also, you can now look up the complaints we receive about businesses! Please check out our new consumer resource: [Be InfORmed](#).

**FASHION MODEL RIP-OFF**

Oregon Attorney General John Kroger reminds Oregonians to be on the lookout for questionable modeling opportunities advertised on the internet. Although a perpetual problem, scam artists will often exploit current events, such as Portland's 2010 "Fashion Week" happening now, as a means to give legitimacy to their scams. Modeling scams come in a variety of forms, but one thing they all have in common is the scam artists behind them assume you're all beauty and no brains. Following are a few of the more common internet modeling scams:

#### **The "Surprise! It's Not a Job Interview but a High-Pressure Sales Pitch" Scam**

You respond to a "job" announcement on-line, and what you think is an interview for a modeling job turns into a high-pressure sales pitch for modeling or acting classes, "shoots" or "screen tests." The salesperson seems eager to assist you with your modeling career, but you must first pay them hundreds or thousands of dollars. It's all an act! Never sign a document without reading and understanding it first - ask for a blank copy of the contract and take it home to review with someone you trust.

#### **The "Hurry: This Opportunity Won't Last Long" Scam**

Scam artists draft fake on-line ads for bogus modeling opportunities with the caveat that you must first pay to learn more about the opportunity. You may be required to pay for a monthly subscription to a "talent service" or a "limited offer on a discounted photo shoot," or wire money to cover the cost of a "booking agent." Don't be deceived by smooth sales talk - request an in-person meeting before you agree to pay for a modeling agent or scout. And remember: if it sounds too good to be true, it usually is.

#### **The "Easy Money for Small Work" Scam**

Be leery of claims about high salaries. Successful models in smaller markets can earn \$75 to \$100 an hour, but the work is irregular. Ask the company for references. Get the names and contact information of models and actors who have successfully secured work through the company. When possible, request local contacts and try to meet with the referred contact in-person.

#### **The "Here's a Check for the Photo Session" Scam**

Some scam artists try to attract your attention to modeling work with promises of free "photo shoots" and paid trips to New York City. After you express an interest in their offer, the crook will send you a fake check as "advanced payment" for the photo session. The crook then will ask you to wire transfer some of the counterfeit funds to a "photographer," "studio," or "booking agent" to seal the deal. NEVER WIRE MONEY as a means to secure a job. Money transfers are the preferred means for international scam artists to steal money - the money is hard to trace and the victim does not realize they have been scammed until after their bank notifies them that the original check they deposited is worthless.

#### **The "You Have the Cutest Baby Ever" Scam**

Bogus talent agents will try to convince proud parents and relatives that their child is modeling material and offer to set up a professional photo session for the little tyke. In reality, the modeling market for infants and toddlers is small. Moreover, because an infant's look will change quickly, rendering photos outdated, very few infants are marketed with professional photos. Legitimate agents, producers and advertising agencies will ask for casual snapshots.

Not all modeling agents or schools are bad - do your homework to make sure your beauty can truly shine. Here are a few quick tips to avoid a model rip-off:

- Get everything in writing, including promises that have been made orally.
- Keep copies of important papers, such as your contract with the company and any literature or company advertisements.
- Be leery of companies that only accept payment by cash or money order - this is how scam artists prefer to be paid.
- Ask the agency for a list of specific jobs where it has placed its models and contact those companies to verify the agency's claims.
- Be suspicious of a company that requires an up-front fee to serve as your agent.
- Steer clear of companies that require you to use a specific photographer, rather, compare fees and work quality of several photographers.
- Check-out the company with both the [Better Business Bureau](#), and Oregon Department of Justice's on-line complaint research tool: [Be InfORmed](#).

The Oregon Department of Justice Consumer Hotline, 1-877-877-9392, is a free resource for all Oregonians with consumer questions, concerns or complaints. Attorney General Kroger and the Oregon Department of Justice are dedicated to fighting fraud and helping consumers who have been deceived by modeling agencies or schools. If you or someone you know has been deceived by a modeling scam, please contact the Consumer Hotline for assistance.

#### Quick Links

[DOJ Web Site](#)

[Sign Up for the Scam Alert Network](#)

[Be InfORmed: Search Consumer Complaints Online](#)

[File a Consumer Complaint](#)

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