



Crime Risk: Internet Selling Sites & The Risk Of Robbery

The LVMPD would like to make the community aware of an emerging risk with regards to the use of Internet selling sites, such as Craigslist and others. As these sites become more main stream, they also have been discovered by the criminal element. The use of these sites poses a risk to both the buyer and the seller. The key components for these sites are strangers doing business with each other, items of value priced below current consumer prices, and usually a cash transaction. The endless amount of items that are posted as available for purchase and the high demand for electronic items has been the basis for several recent robbery incidents. While most Internet selling sites post safety tips, the following crime prevention considerations are provided to increase community awareness and reduce these incidents.

- **Be aware of the risks of doing business with strangers.** Never meet a stranger in an isolated or dark area. Seek out a populated location that you choose and do not go alone or at night. Consider using a Police Station parking lot.
- The opportunity for robbery is easy for the criminal who knows you will be arriving with cash if you are the buyer, or valuables if you are the seller.
- **The ability to verify who you are actually doing business with is very slim.** Ask questions, obtain names and contact phone numbers, ask to see identification. Let them know prior to the meeting you will be verifying who you are doing business with.
- **Do not arrange any meetings at your place of residence.** Do not answer any questions about other items you might be selling or wanting to buy. Keep conversations related only to the item posted for sale.
- **Consider that a very low priced item of value could very likely be stolen.** Purchasing stolen items is a risk because the person may be involved in criminal activity and therefore a risk to your personal safety. Prices that are "too good to be true" usually have a reason and that often includes crime.
- **Trust your instincts and do not put yourself in jeopardy just to get a "good deal".** No item, regardless of price, is worth your safety or other complications such as being defective, etc.
- **Be alert and observant** of the individuals you are dealing with, including their transportation, and pay attention to others with them, others nearby, or any detail that makes you feel uncomfortable.
- **If confronted with a robbery attempt, do not resist, or react with violence yourself.** As difficult as it may be, comply and do not attempt to be a hero or to act in any way that increases the danger you may already be in. Be a good witness and call 9-1-1 as soon as it is safe for you to do so. Do not let there be a long time lapse before placing a 9-1-1 call.
- **Do not let the excitement and ease of making a purchase cloud your judgment.** Back out of any situation prior to arriving if your instincts are indicating this might not be a good idea.
- **Be smart. Be protective. Remember, criminals seek and create opportunity. Internet selling sites provide both!**