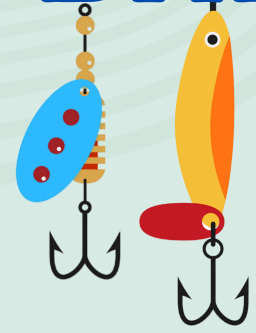# DON'T TAKE THE BAIT

Seller impersonation fraud is on the rise.
Know the red flags. Don't be lured by these seller behaviors.

Absentee Owners

Scammers often target vacant land, rentals, second homes, and properties with absentee owners. If no one's home, scammers might be trying to hook unsuspecting buyers.

Too Good to Be True

A seller pushing a low-price, all-cash deal could be baiting you. If it's too good to be true, beware.

Phantom FSBOs

That For-Sale-By-Owner listing seems fishy when no one knows the seller and no one's talked to them until it's offer time.

Gone Phishing

If the seller avoids calls and only communicates by email or text, you could be dealing with a fraudster.

Rush to Close

You may be in the boat with a fraudster if your seller is too eager to close, readily accepting almost all terms and prioritizing a quick cash transaction.

No Show at Closing

The seller may say they'll attend closing but when the date nears, they are suddenly out of town or unavailable. They will still be available to sign documents from a different city or state.

Fishy Finances

The seller provides wiring instructions for their proceeds to a bank that is not geographically close to the property or the mailing address for the tax bill.

Suspicious Phone

A reverse phone number search may reveal that the seller's number shows an unrelated name, or could indicate the phone they are using is a burner phone.

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Avoid remote closings
- Ask for a copy of the individual's ID and request in-person identity checks
- Request copies of documents such as the most recent tax or utility bill or a survey
- When in doubt, send a certified letter to the address of record on the tax bill
- Search social media for the individual
- Call to verify the notary public's attestation

GET FOREWARN

As a VAR member, you have access to FOREWARN, a FREE mobile (or desktop) app that helps you quickly verify a client's identity and background, enhancing your safety and protecting you from fraud. Visit vermontrealtors.com/forewarn.

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