

My Car Check Reports Sharp Rise In Used Vehicle Scams

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Buyers and sellers targeted online by organised criminal gangs

My Car Check – the UK's No.1 consumer vehicle data provider – has warned of a sharp rise in scams targeting used car and motorbike buyers and sellers (see email text below). Telltale signs that conmen might be involved include:

- Vehicles advertised for considerably less than they are worth
- Mention of the vehicle being shipped to or from another country
- All communication conducted via email, often in broken English

Justin Powell, manager of My Car Check's Glasgow call centre, said: "We are constantly hearing about scams in the used vehicle market, but the frequency of these calls has increased markedly in recent weeks. They are nearly always private sales (not vehicles offered by dealers) because the crooks prey on peoples' unfamiliarity with the process. We urge both buyers and sellers to be extra vigilant. The volume and complexity of these scams suggests the involvement of organised criminal gangs.

"For buyers, our history checks can prevent an expensive mistake, but all too often people contact us after the event, because they fear something is wrong. One such customer recently transferred £11,000 on the promise of a car being shipped from Germany. It was a classic escrow scam. Rather than going into a secure holding account, the money was simply pocketed by the criminals. The car will never arrive."

Actual email targeting a buyer interested in a Ford Focus

Hello there, I am glad to hear that you are interested to buy my 2006 Ford Focus ST2. Although I am registered in the UK, i recently moved to Cadiz, Spain (where my family is from) and the car is being shipped from here. I want to sell it in UK due to the fact that it's an UK version (right handed). It still has UK registration, so you won't have to pay any import and insurance fees. You will get from me the keys and all documents to register the car in you name. If the car is not how i described it, i will offer a full refund. It will be insured during transportation and will be delivered at your address in maximum 10 days. Final price is GBP 4,000 (the price includes shipping and insurance fees).

Justin Powell continued: "Used vehicle sellers also need to keep their wits about them. The email below, targeting the seller of a Triumph motorbike, is typical of the wording we see time and again. In this case, a fake or fraudulent PayPal account is 'the convincer'. If the seller had gone ahead, his bike would have been collected and shortly afterwards it would have emerged that payment hadn't been made. The bike would then have been sold to another unsuspecting victim. Fortunately, in this instance, the seller double checked with us and didn't fall for it."

Actual email targeting the seller of a Triumph motorbike

Thanks for your response. I'm quite satisfied with the condition and price, and I need you to understand that i am willing and ready to purchase it right away, end the advert, consider me as your favorite buyer just to close the deal and not selling to other buyer. However, I will not be able to come for inspection, all i need is your word of sincerity that it is in good condition as described online. If possible can you send me some more recent picture... I will be paying the PayPal charges (3.4%) from my account and will be paying directly into your PayPal account without any delay, and I hope you have a paypal account. If you have one already, just send me the address to send it to, which is the email address you use for it or you can send me a paypal money request, so once i receive the details i will go ahead with the payment through PayPal and then I will contact my shipping company after you get the payment. I will need your home address for it to be Picked Up by the Shipping Company.

My Car Check's parent company, CDL Vehicle Information Services, performs over a million look-ups a day for companies including AutoExpress, CompareTheMarket, Go-Compare, Moneysupermarket, Swiftcover, Tesco Compare and WhatCar?.

It uses up-to-the-minute data from the police, the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), the Association of British Insurers (ABI) and all major finance houses.

To help UK consumers make the right choice, My Car Check can confirm in seconds whether your

potential pride and joy has ever been scrapped, stolen or written-off, has any money owing on it, has had a plate or colour change and much more.

Know what you're getting into: My Car Check

(Ends)

(Words = 768)

Notes To Editors

Hi res images are available on request. Justin Powell is available for interview.

My Car Check, My MotorCycle Check, MyCarCheck Trade, My Text Check and the My Car Check apps are brands of CDL Vehicle Information Services, owned by CDL Group Holdings Ltd of Stockport, Cheshire.

The entry-level MyCarCheck.com check costs just £2.95. For £9.95 our Gold Check also includes a PDF certificate with outstanding finance, mileage and valuation results. Our Platinum Check and bundles include the above and a guarantee of up to £20,000 subject to terms and conditions.

CDL Vehicle Information Services is a member of the British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (BVRLA), the Consumer Credit Trade Association (CCTA), the Finance and Leasing Association (FLA), the Motor Asset Registration Service (MARS), the National Association of Motor Auctions (NAMA) and the Vehicle Remarketing Association (VRA).

For customer service please contact our UK-based call centre on 0330 331 0030. Lines are open 9am-7pm Monday to Friday and 10am-4pm on Saturday.

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