

# Secret Shopper Scam

**Never give out personal financial information.**

When you see "work from your home" advertisements on online job boards and/or in the newspaper, be careful. With many of these postings, even filling out the application is a risk. If you are asked for personal information that identifies you, like your social security or driver's license number, or if the 'employer' wants to deposit money into your bank account as part of the job — DO NOT GIVE OUT YOUR PERSONAL FINANCIAL INFORMATION.

The latest scam to hit our area is the Mystery Shopper scam. In this scam, the crooks ask you to test their customer service when using payment services. First, they will send you a check and ask you to cash it so that you will not have to use any of your own money for the job. You are also given a number of wire service locations (or other electronic payment services) and instructed to pretend to be a customer by sending some of the money to a name and address at the wire service location. At the end of all this, they tell you that you will be asked to rate their customer service experience. Here is the scam part - your wires will go through, returning the money to the crooks. While the check initially deposited into your account will be returned as a fraudulent payment and charged against your account.

Keep your financial identity safe and never give out your personal financial information.