



# JOB SCAMS

## IS THIS A REAL JOB?

### WHAT IS A JOB SCAM?

This could mean an ad, company or agency that makes a false offer of work while asking you to pay a fee for their services. Some workers, like security guards, report many problems with companies charging fees for training that does not result in a job. Make sure you trust the company fully before signing a contract or paying a fee for services or training. Once you pay money to a company, it is often very difficult to get it back.

### TIPS TO AVOID JOB SCAMS

#### **Is the company legal?**

Get as much contact information as you can when you research a potential employer. Make sure you have the employer's first and last name, address, fax, phone numbers, and any other useful information like head office, website, and email address. If the company is not willing to provide any of this information, you may decide not to pay any money to them until you have it. Otherwise, it will be hard to find them if the job is a scam.

#### **Should I pay to get work?**

No employer should ask you to pay a fee before you start working. Examples of fees include payment for supplies, equipment, training, transportation, placement fees, or application processing. In some cases, after you have been hired, you may be asked to buy your own uniform - this is legal. Temporary agencies cannot charge you a fee for signing up with them, assigning you work or helping with job skills. This is illegal. However, job placement agencies or "head hunters" that find you permanent positions can charge these fees.

#### **Should I pay for training?**

Watch out for employers or placement agencies that make you pay for training to get a job. If there is no job offer at the end of the training, it can be difficult to get a refund. Often, employers provide some kind of training when you start a new job. While training can be paid at a lower rate of pay than your hourly rate when you begin working, it must be at least minimum wage.

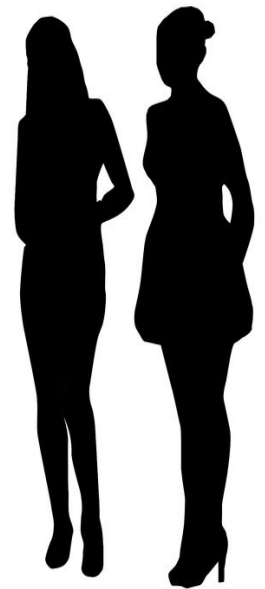
#### **Don't be pressured to sign any contracts.**

Make sure you know exactly what the contract means before signing it. If you sign a contract, it does not mean you are agreeing to the illegal parts of the contract. But it may be harder to get your money back later. Ask for time to think about it first.

#### **Watch out for fees deducted from your pay.**

It is illegal for employers to deduct money for equipment, damage, or "faulty work". Your employer cannot deduct money from your pay unless you sign an agreement that tells you how much will be deducted. Temp agencies should not be deducting fees for finding you an assignment or helping you with job skills, like resume writing.

Sasha saw a job ad for a window cleaning position and went to apply. At the office, she was told that she would be guaranteed a job as a window cleaner if she paid \$450 to complete the training program and purchased supplies. Sasha agreed. After the training, she did not hear from the company. Two weeks passed and Sasha called the company. She was told that they were in the process of finding her a job, but there was no guarantee. Sasha waited another week and tried to contact the company, but this time no one answered. Sasha had no copy of the contract and the company was not returning her calls.



What could Sasha have done to protect herself?

## PROTECT YOURSELF

- Write down a detailed description of what happened. Include dates, times, addresses, witnesses, and even license plate numbers. You might need this information later on to get a refund.
- Did this company advertise in a newspaper? Call that newspaper and report the scam. They may remove it or look into your report.
- If you saw a job ad at an employment centre, tell the staff what happened, ask them to remove the ad and call the company who placed the ad. They may also be able to warn other workers who use the employment centre.
- Some employers make workers sign contracts that say they are “independent contractors”. Sometimes companies do this to avoid employment standards laws. Call S.W.E.AC for more information on your employee status; you may be an employee even if your boss says you are not.



## GET SUPPORT

**Contact the Sudbury Workers Education and Advocacy Centre for more information about job scams and your rights at work.**

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