

VHR scam warning issued by Truckee

The increased demand for rental properties is often associated with an increase in criminals taking advantage of unsuspecting victims.

Truckee police officers are warning people that vacation rental scams are a common occurrence.

It usually begins by a suspect searching the internet for legitimate houses for rent or sale. The scammer then uses the photos of the home in the listing as well as the description to create a fake advertisement displaying the house as available to rent. These false ads are most commonly found on Craigslist, officers said.

The victim contacts the alleged owner, reserves vacation rental dates, and deposits money directly into the suspect's account. Upon arrival, the true homeowner is often very surprised, and the victim comes to the realization that they have been scammed.

In these types of scams, the victim typically loses between \$1,000 and \$2,000.

Scammers often use voice over IP (VoIP) phones or proxy servers for email correspondence from public places (often in foreign countries), making tracing the phone number or IP addresses and identifying the suspect nearly impossible. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is aware of, and is currently investigating these kinds of cases.

Truckee officers recommend people use reputable sources with verified business addresses, phone contacts, and employees. If paying for a deposit, use a credit card that has fraud protection. If the deal seems odd or unusual, find another

property.

Home owners should check the internet to see if their property is fraudulently listed for rent.