

# Puppy Buyers Bark Up the Wrong Tree

1/23/2012

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Better Business Bureau serving Alaska, Oregon and Western Washington has received reports of scams targeting consumers looking to purchase puppies online.

Legitimate-looking websites and classified ads entice pet shoppers with cute puppy pictures, detailed descriptions, and below-average prices. When shoppers contact sellers and attempt to make purchases, they are directed to wire money - typically overseas - to complete paperwork and secure shipping. Buyers then receive emails that contain shipping receipts, animal crate numbers, flight numbers and times, and other seemingly genuine information.

Unfortunately, there are no puppies; and flight information and courier names are rarely verifiable. BBB reports indicate that these scammers will go so far as to claim that animals have arrived locally, but cannot be released until further processing fees are paid by wire transfer.

One Virginia-based consumer wired \$300 to Cameroon for two English Bulldogs that were to be delivered to his home via an Alaska-based moving company, but became suspicious after receiving a second invoice. He then called the moving company, which had no knowledge of the transaction.

When purchasing puppies online, there are several things to consider:

- Beware of unreasonably low prices; check the [American Kennel Club](#) website for appropriate rates.
- Be cautious of sellers that only accept wire transfer payments.
- Look for spelling and grammatical errors on websites and in emails; this is a common red flag in overseas scams.
- Always seek complete contact information and avoid sellers that are unable or unwilling to provide it.
- Good breeders should be more concerned with placing animals in good homes than getting paid; walk away from transactions that seem suspicious.

Dogs may be man's best friend, but BBB is the consumer's best friend; visit [bbb.org](#) to [report scams](#), check BBB Business Reviews and find marketplace advice.

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