



Crime Watch

Fighting Mail Fraud

(NAPS)—Consumer fraud is big business. To help cancel out mail fraud, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service wants to make consumers aware of these top five mail fraud schemes:



Stamping out mail fraud is now easier. Consumers can file their complaints online.

- **Advance fee loans.** A con artist offers a “guaranteed” loan for a fee paid in advance.

- **Prizes or sweepstakes.** Congratulations! You’re the lucky winner of one of four prizes! You simply have to pay a “processing fee” to find out what you’ve won.

- **Charity Frauds.** Either the money never gets to the charity or the charity doesn’t exist at all.

- **Failure to render merchandise or services.** Includes Internet auction fraud.

- **Employment schemes.** The con artist charges you for materials you could have gotten for free from the hiring government agency—which may or may not have openings.

If you are the victim of mail fraud, you can now file your complaint online at the Postal Inspection Service’s Web site, www.usps.com/postalinspectors.

Visitors to the site can complete the form and submit it electronically with one keystroke. Consumers may still obtain the complaint form from their local post office, by downloading it off the Internet, or by dialing 1-800-372-8347.



Feb 5-11 has been designated National Consumer Protection Week, though this article is evergreen and can be used throughout the year.