

# University of Miami Medical Campus Crime Summary Report July 2009

## **\*\*Tip of the Month\*\***

### **ONLINE AUCTION FRAUD Don't Let it Happen to You**

*Computers, sports memorabilia, rare coins, designer fashions, and even cars.*

These are just a few of the items offered for sale every day on legitimate online auction sites. They're also just a small sample of the items used to lure unsuspecting victims into online auction fraud schemes.

Most of the one million-plus transactions that take place each day on these websites are legitimate; just a fraction actually result in some type of fraud.

**There are a variety of auction frauds, but here are some of the more common ones to watch out for:**

- **Overpayment fraud** targets the seller. A seller advertises a high-value item—like a car or a computer—on the Internet. A scammer contacts the seller to purchase the item, and then sends the seller a counterfeit check or money order for an amount greater than the price of the item. The purchaser asks the seller to deposit the payment, deduct the actual sale price, and then return the difference to the purchaser.
- **Wire transfer schemes** start with fraudulent and misleading ads for the sale of high-value items being posted on well-known online auction sites. When buyers take the bait, they are directed to wire money to the crooks using a money transfer company. Once the money changes hands, the buyer never hears from them again.
- **Second-chance schemes** involve scammers who offer losing bidders of legitimate auctions the opportunity to buy the item(s) they wanted at reduced prices. They usually require that victims send payment through money transfer companies, but then don't follow through on delivery.

And needless to say, in all of these schemes customers never get what they pay for.

**Who is behind the scams?** Mostly individuals, however, there are exceptions: criminal enterprises from West Africa are especially fond of the overpayment scams, while Romanian crime groups favor the second-chance schemes.

**So, how can you avoid being a victim of auction fraud? A few tips:**

- Ask the seller for a phone number and verify it.
- Beware of buyers who insist on wire transfers as the only form of payment they'll accept.
- For big-ticket items, use a legitimate online escrow service that will hold the payment until you receive what you've ordered.
- If you receive an overpayment as a seller, don't cash it but instead ask for the exact purchase price.
- Don't ever give out your social security or driver's license number—a legitimate seller wouldn't ask.
- Be skeptical if the price sounds too low.

# Thefts

## 07/09 Rosenstiel Medical Science Building

Researcher reported that she discovered her wallet and cell phone missing from her purse when she arrived home. The purse was left in an unsecured office on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. The wallet contained \$100.00 cash credit and identification. On 07/10 the researcher found all the items in her vehicle. (Solved)

## 07/16 Medical Book Store

A female took unknown items and placed them in her purse, then left without paying for the items. Security responded and was unable to locate the female.

## 07/23 Medical Book Store

A male took a candy bar and left the store without paying. Security responded and was unable to locate him.

## 07/24 Bascom Palmer Eye Institute

Employee reported that a Casio digital camera and a \$50.00 gift card were missing from his bag left in an unsecured 3<sup>rd</sup> floor room.

# Assault

None

# Burglary

None

# Vehicle Incidents

## 07/06 Bascom Palmer Eye Institute Valet Parking Lot

Valet employee exiting the lot struck a vehicle entering causing minor damage and no injuries.

## 07/15 UM Hospital and Clinics

Visitor backing out of a space in the west lot struck another parked vehicle causing minor damage.

## 07/16 UM Hospital and Clinics

A UM van was exiting the parking area and struck a parked tractor trailer causing minor damage to the van.

## 07/20 14<sup>th</sup> Street Garage

The brake was not properly applied to a parked golf cart causing it to back into a vehicle causing a small scratch.

07/24 14<sup>th</sup> Street Garage

Employee noticed scratches on the passenger's side of his vehicle that was parked on the 9<sup>th</sup> level.

07/26 UM Hospital and Clinics Valet Lot

Visitor struck a parked vehicle while backing out of a space causing minor damage.

07/30 UM Hospital Garage

Visitor's vehicle struck by another visitor's vehicle that jumped a curb trying to negotiate a turn on the 2<sup>nd</sup> level. Minor damage and no injuries.

## Trespassers

07/02 15<sup>th</sup> Street Garage

Security observed a known female trespasser near the building. Miami Police responded and transported the female.

07/03 Dominion Garage

Security called about a suspicious male. Security discovered the male sleeping behind the dumpster and escorted him away from the area.

07/06 Medical Bookstore

Employee called regarding a female who was using the books to do research. The female was contacted and escorted out of the store.

07/06 Clinical Research Building

Security advised of a male selling picture frames on the 11<sup>th</sup> floor. The male was contacted and escorted out of the building.

07/07 Debbie School/Mailman Center

Security notified about a male sleeping on a bench outside of the north entrance. The male was escorted off the property.

07/09 Dominion Garage

Security discovered a male sleeping near a north side ground floor business. The male was escorted away from the area.

07/09 Bascom Palmer Eye Institute

A suspicious male was observed by security on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor taking food items left out for patients. It was determined that he was not a patient and was escorted out of the building.

07/09 Biomedical Research Building

It was reported to security that a male was behind the building drinking beer and urinating. The male was observed leaving the area.

07/14 Park Plaza East

Security summoned because a male was banging on the windows of a ground floor office. The male was gone when security arrived.

07/14 **Dominion Garage**

Security advised of a male in front of a ground floor suite causing a disturbance. The male was contacted and escorted away from the building.

07/15 **Dominion Garage**

An employee called regarding a male causing a disturbance in the Subway Restaurant. Security contacted the male in the area and observed him until he left the area.

07/16 **Bascom Palmer Eye Institute**

Known trespasser observed entering the main lobby by security. After finding that he had no business with the hospital he left the area.

07/16 **Bascom Palmer Eye Institute Valet Lot**

Security advised of an unauthorized male in the lot. The male was contacted and escorted away from the property.

07/19 **Schoneninger Research Quadrangle**

Employee activated the emergency phone after a suspicious male approached her asking for money. The male was contacted and escorted off the property.

07/25 **14<sup>th</sup> Street Surface Parking Lot**

Facilities employees called security when a male was found sitting in their golf cart. Security contacted the male and escorted him off the property.

07/26 **Elliot Building**

Security found a female sleeping on the staff entrance steps and she was escorted away from the building.

07/29 **Vicana Building**

Security advised of a male sleeping in a vehicle stored on the north side of the building. Male contacted, Miami Police responded and the male was warned and left the area.

## **Escorts**

University of Miami Security Officers provided escorts to any place on campus, including Metrorail. We encourage you to use this service when walking alone and particularly after hours. Security Officers will meet you at your work location and escort you safely to your vehicle, Metrorail, or any other building on campus. Call 243-6079 to request an escort. You may be able to reduce your waiting time if you call a few minutes before you are ready to leave.

**During July, security officers provided 128 escorts with an average waiting time of 3:49 minutes.**

# **General Information**

## **FREE SECURITY SURVEYS or CRIME PREVENTION SEMINARS**

Conducted on an individual or group basis. To make an appointment or to request information, call Lee Michaud, Crime Prevention & Training Manager at 243-5084.

## **CRIME TIP HOTLINE (243-6280)**

Caller can remain anonymous. All information kept confidential. Ask for Craig Hopkins, Investigator at 243-6280.