

## **They've Found Your Dog!**

*Recently, your beloved pet and best friend somehow managed to stray from home. Your dog (cat, bird or other family pet) has been missing for a few weeks and you've put up posters and placed advertisements seeking anyone who can help you locate your pet. Finally your perseverance has paid off. Your dog has been found!*

*It seems that the dog was wandering by the side of a highway and was picked up by a concerned truck driver. With a tight schedule to keep, the driver hadn't had time to search for the dog's owner and return him right away. So the dog is now with him on the other side of the country just waiting to come home. The driver describes the dog and provides enough information to be convincing.*

*The driver has offered to ship your pet home via an airline. He seems very caring and concerned. He isn't even looking for a reward. All he needs is the money to put the dog on the plane. Because he is on the road, he suggests that you send the money via a money transfer service. That way he can stay on schedule, receive the funds wherever he is and get the dog back home as soon as possible.*

*You send the money and wait anxiously at the airport. Unfortunately, your dog never arrives. In fact, the "concerned driver" was a con artist who never actually had the dog. You have been the victim of the Lost Pet scam.*

### **Lost pet scam**

As anyone with a four-legged friend can tell you, it's difficult when they are lost or injured. The Lost Pet scam is designed to prey on a consumer's emotions. Distraught over the loss of a beloved pet, consumers often post information including the pet's name, distinguishing marks and the area in which it was lost. Con artists use this information to convince a consumer that his pet has been found.

The scam may vary. Sometimes the individual may try to claim any reward offered as well as expenses to return the pet. He or she may claim that the animal has been injured and that they need money to pay for veterinary care before the pet can be returned. They may claim that someone they know has stolen the animal and that they can help you get it back – for a price. The scammer may call back several times, inventing more and more expenses that must be paid to retrieve the animal.

As emotional as these situations are, it is important to use caution and common sense when dealing with anyone demanding money for the return of a pet. Below are a few ideas for avoiding lost pet scams:

- Ask yourself whether the information used to identify the pet was included in an advertisement or flyer. If so, use caution before sending funds to a stranger.
- Try to obtain information about the animal that was not posted publicly in order to be certain that the individual is, in fact, in possession of your pet.
- Contact local law enforcement to determine if other people in the area have been victims of a lost pet scam.
- Remember, Western Union does not advise using money transfer services to send money to a stranger or someone whose identity you can't verify.

Western Union takes the issue of consumer fraud very seriously. We value our consumers and know that they work hard for their money. When consumers lose by becoming the victim of fraud,



## SECURITY ALERT

we feel like we lose too. That's why we're working to create greater awareness of the many types of consumer fraud.

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