



RECRUITMENT SCAMS

If it looks too good to be true it probably is.

There are various types of cruise fraud, but they almost all depend on the offer of jobs that require no qualifications, but which will pay high wages or attract large tips.

The main type involves a promise of work in return for a bribe or payment. This may be disguised as an agency or registration fee or, increasingly, as payment for a medical examination, visa, passport processing or bank transfer that is only asked for when you think you're on the point of getting the job.

It may be made to look like something you have to pay a government department, clinic or bank, or you may be asked for money for airfares to join a ship and promised you'll get the money back when you're arrive. YOU WILL NOT.

OTHER FRAUDS INCLUDE:

- Payment of money direct to a local bank in order to join a cargo ship (often supposedly waiting for you in Port Harcourt, Nigeria).
- Payment to have your job application or CV circulated to prospective employers, often with a guarantee that if you don't get a job, you'll get your money back. You can usually be sure you will not get either.
- Websites that invite you to post your CV for free. Your personal details can be used for identity fraud, especially if you are then approached by an employer who asks you to send your passport and seafarers' certificate (this is also a common feature of the Nigerian scam mentioned above, whose perpetrators regularly use different company names, including ones supposedly based in the USA or Europe).
- Unsolicited job offers that arrive by e-mail.

HOW DO THEY GET AWAY WITH IT?

By using high quality websites, newspaper adverts and fictitious addresses in countries such as the UK in order to appear legitimate, or by laying a trail through several countries in order to confuse jurisdiction or hide their location in a country where the authorities either don't care or will turn a blind eye.

WHO SHOULD I AVOID?

We could give a list of the companies and websites we have exposed but it would quickly become out of date. It's important to remember that the criminals who run them are easily able to change their 'company' names from one week to the next. They can also use a name that is close to, or the same as, a legitimate enterprise (but with a different address or bank or Western Union transfer details.) As long as governments leave them in peace, they'll keep trying to part honest jobseekers from their money.

HOW DO I KNOW WHO TO TRUST?

At first, you will not. You cannot trust glossy websites or newspaper ads or, in some cases, even governments or banks. What you can trust is the simple fact that if it looks too good to be true it usually is.

Requesting advance payments for work on ships is prohibited under international maritime conventions, so you should not be asked for one.

If instead you're told you need to pay airfares or registration fees, ask yourself why the people who are offering these well-paid jobs can't find that money themselves. Look out too for the use of box numbers and false addresses and take time to do a Google search on the company name and 'scam' or 'fraud' or 'warning'. If nothing turns up but you are unsure that the company is legitimate you can approach your national seafarers' trade union or the ITF for advice.

Above all remember that you should not have to pay for work at sea and that if anything about a job looks wrong or looks like what you've read here you should stay well away from it.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding a job or job offer, you can contact us via email at jobscam@itf.org.uk

