

PACKAGE DELIVERY SCAM

Typology 2020



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Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) Guyana

Package Delivery Scam

Analysis of information received from licensed financial institutions reveals a growing trend of persons depositing funds into accounts of third parties, not known or hardly known to them. In most instances, the purpose of the deposit is stated as ‘fees for clearing packages consigned to the depositor’. In other cases, it’s indicated that the funds were for ‘family assistance’ or ‘Payment for Box-Hand’.

Acquaintances are reported to have been established through communication on social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp, **by random telephone calls and through social engineering.**

Some subjects were promised **special assistance** to relieve hardship caused by **the COVID – 19 Pandemic** and therefore **completed and submitted documents (such as forms) containing their personal information, to** questionable sites/domains.

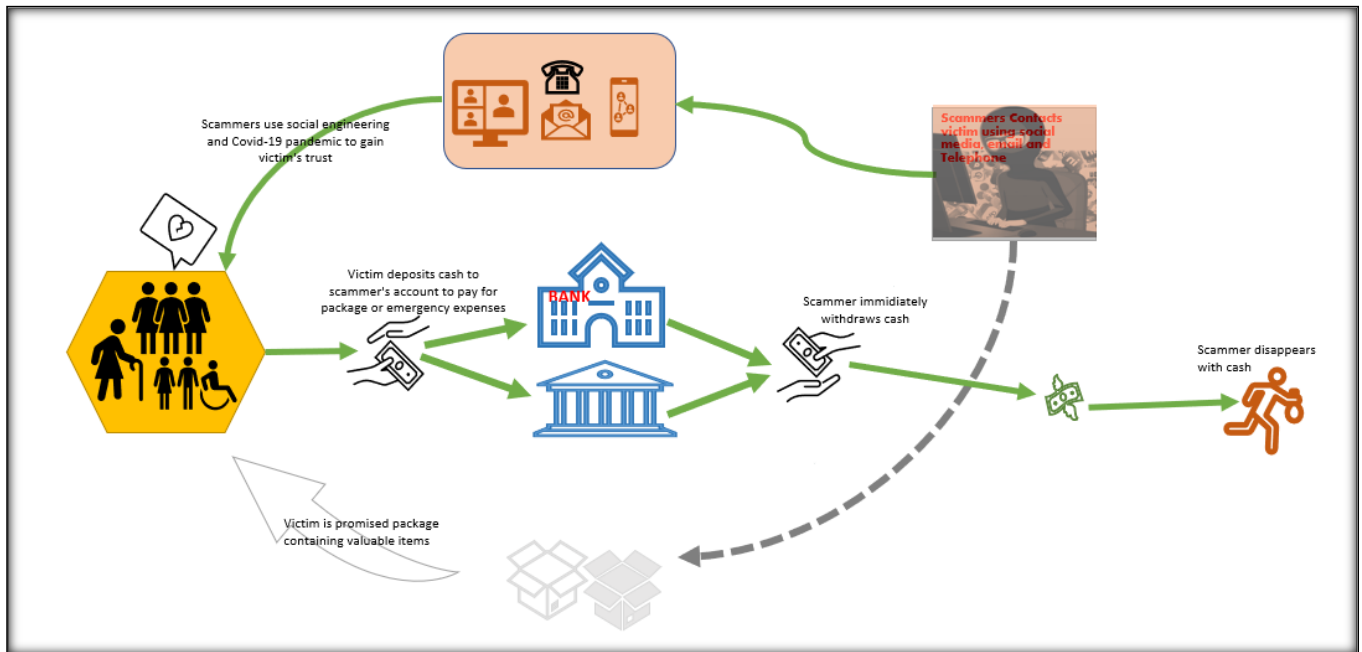
Items Promised included, Laptop Computers, Mobile Phones, Jewelry, and other electronic devices.

The scammer persuades victims to send them money or deposit it their account to cover fictitious Brokerage Fees, Customs Duties and/or Shipping Charges for package(s) containing valuable items which is about to be shipped to the victim or has to be cleared at customs.

The victim is sometimes persuaded to provide false information to the MTA concerning the purpose of the transaction, to ensure the transaction is not delayed, flagged or to cause the MTA to file a Suspicious transaction report. The MTAs appear to be aware of the ‘package delivery scam’ and have been flagging transfers which purpose is to clear packages.

A few persons attempted to reclaim the funds they deposited upon realizing they have been scammed. It was however observed that the funds were immediately withdrawn from the account by the scammer/s after which they discontinued all contact and communication with the victim.

With respect to persons who made deposits and claimed they were for box-hand payments, the banks recognized that none of the persons who made deposits received payouts, as is the custom in box-hand arrangements.



These incidents are currently under investigation by law enforcement agencies (LEAs).

Recommendations

- Financial institutions and other reporting entities should continue to take all AMLCFT preventative measures and monitor the ML/TF risks associated with transactions involving deposits for third parties. This is to ensure their institutions are not being used to facilitate these types of illegal activities.
- Reporting entities should ensure that accurate and up-to-date customer due diligence information is being requested and recorded in relation to the purpose and nature of transactions, including where a customer indicates the purpose of the transaction relates to 'consignee and package delivery' arrangements. This is to ensure, that upon request by a law enforcement agency, accurate and up-to date customer account information is readily available.
- Reporting entities, supervisory authorities and relevant authorities as well as private sector organizations, should be aware of and sensitive to the possibility of scams associated with the COVID-19 Pandemic and seek to verify the authenticity of offers for relief assistance packages before providing personal information;
- Members of the public should be mindful of persons who are not acquaintances who seek to provide or facilitate special relief packages for a fee or payment.