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How to navigate small ad platforms safely

Small ad platforms are a favourite for use in fraudulent activities. Use them with caution, and make sure to observe our rules of conduct below.

Shopping and paying online has been the norm for a while and is now considered safe, too, in particular when dealing with well-known online shops or payment providers. Particular caution should be exercised still though with small ad platforms, since the business partners you deal with here are private individuals, not always with honest intentions.

Further information on online fraud, in particular on the topic of delivery service advance payment fraud, can be found on this page: www.skppsc.ch/online-betrug (<http://www.skppsc.ch/online-betrug>) (Schweizerische Kriminalprävention, SKP).

You should also observe the following rules of conduct:

- When looking for any items, limit your search to offers from your own region only. This way, many fraudulent offers (which aim to reach as many people as possible) are not displayed in the first place.
- Check reviews and other offers by potential business partners before considering a deal.
- Before every purchase, carefully read the description of the offer involved. Ensure that all information about a product relevant to you is included. In case of doubt, ask.
- Only ever buy and sell collection-only and against cash. Fraudsters are generally located abroad and try to avoid any personal contact with their victims.
- Check every message you receive in connection with small ad platforms, for phishing characteristics. Fraudsters often try to entice you to disclose your log-in or credit card details by sending you faked messages, purportedly by financial institutions or courier services.
- Never send any copy of your ID documentation to persons unknown. Conversely, don't get deceived by any

ID card image sent to you either. Quite often, these have been stolen or faked.

- Never pay any potential insurance, handling or shipping charges in advance.
- Don't get involved in any unconventional or new payment methods you are not familiar with.
- Be wary if your counterpart would like to move to a different channel of communication.
- Stop all contact with your counterpart if he or she tries to push or pressurise you.
- Don't fall for unrealistic offers, use your common sense.