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Fraudsters from the alpine valleys

The Bundesamt für Cybersicherheit (BACS) regularly receives notifications on small ad frauds. These either involve buyers or sellers of goods offered via auction or small ad platforms being scammed.

Auction portals and small ad platforms are very popular. They regularly offer great bargains. That's something fraudsters take advantage of, too: Fake goods or no goods at all, no payment or extortionate hidden fees...

It is easiest and safest if goods are handed over directly – i.e. goods against cash. But that's just what fraudsters don't want. If the other party insists on meeting, the deal is suddenly off.

It is for this reason that fraudsters often cite very remote locations where comparably few people live as their place of residence. They try and dissuade their victims from even thinking of coming to pick up or deliver the goods in person this way. It is therefore frequently Engadine mountain villages or Valais side valleys scammers cite as their place of residence.

Next to applying a healthy level of distrust, you should also follow a few rules of conduct:

- If it looks too good to be true, it probably is: Don't go for unrealistic offers.
- You should limit yourself to offers from your own region. That way, many fraudulent offers (which can reach a wide catchment area) are not displayed in the first place.
- Check reviews of potential business partners before you enter into any deal.
- Carefully read the offer description before you buy. In case of doubt, ask.
- Whenever possible, you should only sell or buy your items collection-only and against cash payments.
- Don't pay any insurance, handling or shipping fees in advance.
- Don't agree any payment methods unfamiliar to you.
- Cut off all contact with a buyer or seller if they try and put you under pressure.

The Bundesamt für Cybersicherheit (BACS) article can be found [here \(https://www.ncsc.admin.ch/ncsc/en/home/aktuell/im-fokus/2024/wochenrueckblick_2.html\)](https://www.ncsc.admin.ch/ncsc/en/home/aktuell/im-fokus/2024/wochenrueckblick_2.html).