

Milpitas Police Department

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Craigslist Safety Tips



The Milpitas Police Department is committed to helping our citizens avoid becoming the next victim of a crime. This is a list of preventive measures that will help protect you if you decide to buy or sell goods from Craigslist.

Chief of Police
Steve Pangelinan

A warning to persons who buy and sell items on Craigslist:

Over the last couple of years, the number of people being robbed when responding to Craigslist ads has been on the rise. There are safety risks when buying or selling goods on Craigslist. Criminals are placing fake ads in hopes of luring people with large amounts of cash to their location, where they can then rob them. Additionally, criminals are also responding to ads in attempt to rob or steal merchandise from the seller.

Use Craigslist with caution. Don't think for one second you can't be robbed, burglarized or scammed. Be very careful who you contact; you never know who the person is or what their motivation may be.

If you're going to buy or sell something on Craigslist, there are a couple of safety precautions you should take.

- **Ask a lot of questions:** Ask as many questions as you can before going to buy the product. If the seller can't answer your questions, there is a good chance that he doesn't actually have the product and could be setting you up.
- **If you are intending on buying something, check out the seller's information:** Ask for a phone number and an address. Take that information, and check the names of the seller online to find out who you are dealing with.
- **Don't buy from sellers who only list an email address:** This should be a red flag that the seller has something to hide.
- **Meet in a public place:** Criminals don't want witnesses; meeting in a public place like a coffee shop or cafe can help ensure your safety. Most of the criminals on Craigslist are looking for an easy target and are not very likely to rob you in a cafe full of people.
- **Don't go alone:** Whether you are attempting to buy or sell an item, consider having a friend accompany you.
- **Never go to a second location:** If you arrive at the predetermined meeting place and the seller or buyer asks to go to another place, this should raise some serious red flags.
- **Trust your instincts:** If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. A lot of these scams are pretty easy to spot. If the deal sounds too good to be true you are better off passing it up.
- **Stay in Communication:** Let your spouse, friends, family or coworkers know where you are going, who you will be meeting and when you will be back.
- **Show up early:** If you are meeting in a public location, show up early and make sure everything looks legitimate. If you have even the slightest concern that something seems out of place, trust your instincts and leave.
- **Be on guard and smart:** Expensive jewelry and provocative clothing can invite an attack.
- **Report any suspicious incidents to the police.**

For further information, please call the Milpitas Police Department, Police Community Relations Unit at (408) 586-2400