

Buying and Selling Pre-owned Vehicles

Nelson residents need to be aware when buying and selling vehicles online. Fake bank drafts, accompanied by fake identification, are being used to purchase vehicles from legitimate sellers. Once the transaction is complete, and the seller has released the vehicle to a buyer, it is later determined that bank draft was illegitimate, and the seller has no way to reclaim the vehicle.

These fraudulently obtained vehicles are then being sold to new buyers. In many cases, the vehicle identification number (VIN) is altered to allow the registration of what would appear to be a legitimate sale. The offenders walk away with the funds, while the buyer is left with an illegitimate purchase that can end up being seized by authorities.

Sellers are advised to:

- Accompany buyers to a legitimate bank and observe a bank draft being ordered.
- Have the bank draft in their possession prior to releasing the vehicle to the buyer.

Buyers are advised to:

- Inquire about the vehicle's history of ownership.
- Inspect the seller's registration documentation carefully.
- Search reported stolen vehicles by entering the VIN of the vehicle in question into the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC)

Be wary of:

- Vehicles that have been re-registered within six months.
- Documentation with a name not corresponding to the ID of the seller, or a seller who refuses to provide picture ID.
- A seller who is unable to give clear details about the vehicle's history of ownership that can be verified, such as dealership/salesman/previous owner that you can contact.
- When conducting background research on a vehicle, you find the vehicle has been previously registered out-of-province or in the United States.
- A price that is below fair market value of the vehicle. If the price seems too good to be true, it probably is.
- There is no single indicator that will identify a criminal purchaser or seller, but the more red flags that are present, the more cautious a consumer should be.

