

# Safety Tips for Buying Online

Here are a few safety tips you can implement to avoid these scams if you plan on buying anything on eBay or Craigslist:

**1) Know who you are dealing with.** Criminals don't want to be identified. If I was going to meet someone to buy or sell something from Craigslist, I would ask them for their name and phone number. I would then ask them to take a photo of their driver's license and text it to me using the same number. If someone will jump through those hoops, they probably aren't going to scam you. If they do, you will have everything police need to track the guy down.

**2) Make the exchange in a public place.** You should not bring buyers into your house. Nor should you go to their residence. It's simply too dangerous. Pick a public place with lots of people around. If you are especially worried, ask the person to meet you in your local police department parking lot for the transaction.

**3) If possible, go to the meet with a friend.** There is safety in numbers. Having a friend to watch your back may dissuade some kinds of violence.

**4) Don't deal with anyone except the buyer/seller.** Most of the scams I see involve some sort of "intermediary." If the buyer offers to send a friend or business partner to pick up the item, I wouldn't accept the offer. Better safe than sorry.

**5) Don't take checks or make change.** Can you tell the difference between a counterfeit check or money order and a legitimate one? I can't. I bet you can't either. Take cash only or deal with an intermediary site like PayPal.