

## Be a Savvy Consumer & Protect Yourself from Seller Impersonation Fraud

**FRAUDSTERS ARE IMPERSONATING PROPERTY OWNERS** to illegally sell residential property they do not own. Because fraudsters are targeting properties that are not owner occupied, it can take months or years for the actual property owner to discover the fraud. There are two victims that are immediately impacted when these fraudulent transactions occur: the unsuspecting buyer and the legitimate property owner.



### Talk to a Title Professional or Real Estate Attorney

Savvy homebuyers should talk to a title professional or real estate attorney about available title insurance coverage options.

If you are a buyer, both the ALTA Owner's Policy and the ALTA Homeowner's Policy of Title Insurance provide coverages for pre-purchase forgery. However, only the ALTA Homeowner's Policy of Title Insurance provides protection for forgery occurring after the property purchase by providing protection for the owner against a third party fraudulently transferring their property.

With deed fraud on the rise, homebuyers may want to ensure their property is protected both as a purchaser and into the future. For post-policy forgery protection, ask a title professional or real estate attorney about the availability of the ALTA Homeowner's Policy of Title Insurance<sup>1</sup>.

### Think You're a Victim of Deed Fraud?

Don't delay, contact local and state law enforcement immediately, including the state bureau of investigation and state attorney general. Additionally, contact your title professional, real estate attorney and/or title insurance policy underwriter.

### Is It Too Good to be True? Ask Questions!

From romance to real estate, if it sounds too good to be true, it very well might be! Ask questions if:

- The property is a vacant lot or occupied by someone other than the actual owner, such as investment property, vacation property or rental property
- The property is for sale below market value
- The seller wants a quick sale, generally in less than three weeks, and may not negotiate fees
- The seller will only communicate by phone or email and won't meet in person

### Contact Your County Recorder About FREE Property Alert Notifications

Where available, complimentary property alert notifications offered by county recorder's offices inform homeowners when any document is filed pertaining to their property. Before paying for any property monitoring service, homeowners should contact their local county recorder's office to ask about signing up for **FREE** property alert notifications.



<sup>1</sup> The ALTA Homeowner's Policy of Title Insurance is not approved by regulators in all states. ALTA Homeowner's Policy of Title Insurance is only available for improved one to four family residential property. Ask your title company if your property qualifies for this coverage.