

DON'T BE A MONEY MULE

Criminals use money laundering techniques to conceal their identity, source, and destination of illicitly obtained money. To do this, they rely on often unsuspecting money mules to transfer proceeds from their crimes without being detected by law enforcement. Money mules are individuals who transfer illegally obtained money on behalf of others using bank accounts, wire transfers, money orders, or checks.

Are You a Money Mule?

Criminals create elaborate stories to assume false identities. Whether pretending to be entrepreneurs or bachelors looking for romance, their end game is to gain the trust of unsuspecting individuals and use them as money mules. There are a few things you should know about common methods used by criminals to recruit money mules.

Employment

- You receive an offer to make money quickly and with little effort.
- You are asked to create a company and a business bank account.
- Your duties are limited to opening accounts, and receiving and sending money.
- The employment offer and other communications are poorly written and include spelling mistakes and grammatical errors.
- The employer does not want to provide you with a copy of a business permit upon request.

Romance

- You meet an individual on an online dating or social media platform.
- Your romantic partner claims to be stationed overseas as a member of the U.S. military, reside in another state, or live abroad due to personal reasons or visa issues.
- Your romantic partner claims to be unable to open a bank account and asks to use yours to transfer money.
- You buy a plane ticket for your romantic partner to visit you, but he or she doesn't arrive because immigration or personal issues prevent him or her from traveling.
- Your romantic partner urgently needs to transfer money because of an unexpected emergency.
- Your romantic partner's friend contacts you on behalf of your romantic partner to ask for money because of an unexpected emergency.

How to Protect Yourself from Becoming a Money Mule

- ✓ Never share your bank account or personally identifiable information – PII.
- ✓ Never open a joint account with anyone other than close family.
- ✓ Never respond to an offer to earn quick and easy money.
- ✓ Never agree to receive and send money on behalf of others.

Money laundering is a crime, and so is being a money mule. If you suspect you were approached to become a money mule, or you have unknowingly become one, contact local law enforcement to report your suspicions. It is never too late to stop helping criminals hide proceeds from their crimes