

Wire Fraud Scam Alert

This important Notice is not intended to provide legal advice. If you have questions, please consult with a lawyer.

Buyer Name(s): _____ (“Buyer”)
Property Address: _____ (“Property”)

There have been instances where criminals have hacked email accounts of various parties involved in a real estate transaction (e.g., lawyers, title agents, mortgage brokers, real estate agents) to divert funds to the criminal’s bank account. A common method used by these criminals is to send, via email, fraudulent wiring instructions. Unfortunately, these emails may appear legitimate – and that is just part of the problem. Based upon this recent criminal activity, we strongly recommend that, as a client of our company, you avoid transmitting any sensitive financial or personal information via email. If you need to send or request sensitive information such as Social Security numbers, bank account and credit card numbers, or wiring instructions, you should **only** provide that information in person, by telephone, overnight mail or secure fax. As an important reminder, the following precautions should be taken related to bank wire transfers.

- **ALWAYS PERSONALLY VERIFY** wire instructions by calling the party who sent the instructions to you. *Use only phone numbers that you have called before or you can otherwise verify.* DO NOT use the number provided in the sender’s email. The hacker may have inserted a fraudulent telephone number in the email. DO NOT send an email to verify instructions because the sender’s listed email address may be false or a hacker may intercept your email to the sender.
- **VERBALLY ASK** the party who sent the instructions to you to confirm the ABA routing number or SWIFT code and the credit account number. Simply asking the sender whether wire instructions were sent is not sufficient because the hacker may have altered the attachment containing the wire instructions.
- **DO NOT AGREE** to requests to forward wire instructions to other parties (or their brokers) unless you have personally, verbally confirmed the instructions.
- **BE VERY SUSPICIOUS** of emails with purportedly updated, revised, or corrected wiring instructions. It is extremely rare that a title agent will change wire instructions during the course of a transaction.
- **MAKE SURE** you are not sending or requesting sensitive financial information in emails (e.g., Social Security numbers, bank accounts, credit card numbers, wiring instructions). Also, make sure to use strong passwords (e.g., 8 characters including both letters and numbers and nothing obvious) and frequently change your passwords.
- **DON’T** open attachments or click on links from unfamiliar sources because they could contain malware or be a phishing scheme, which once opened could allow a hacker the same access that you have to your computer and accounts.
- **PLEASE** feel free to speak directly with the comptroller for Summit Sotheby’s International Realty regarding any questions you may have regarding wire instructions. All Earnest Money Deposits will be returned to buyer-clients in accordance with the terms of the purchase contract, and via check rather than wire transfer.

For more information on wire-fraud scams or to report an incident, please refer to the following links:

- Federal Bureau of Investigation: <http://www.fbi.gov>
- Internet Crime Complain Center: <http://www.ic3.gov>
- National White Collar Crime Center: <http://www.nw3c.org>
- On Guard Online: <http://www.onguardonline.gov>

Sothebys Wire Fraud Scam Alert 04.12.16

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT			
Your signature below acknowledges receipt of a copy of this Wire Fraud Scam Alert.			
Buyer: _____	Date: _____	Buyer: _____	Date: _____