

How to Find a Reputable Mystery Shopping Company

Although there are many reputable mystery shopping companies across North America, there are a few individuals that try to take advantage of this industry and target potential new mystery shoppers with a cheque cashing scam. How the scam works:

1. The scammer runs an ad posing as a mystery shopping recruiter. They get to know you (normally via email) and ask for your contact information.
2. Once they have your contact information, they send you a cheque and ask you to deposit it into your bank. These funds are supposed to be used to complete a mystery shop.
3. You are asked to complete a mystery shop at a money transfer location where you are to wire the most of the funds back to the mystery shopping company whilst evaluating customer service at the location.
4. You keep some of the funds for completing the assignment.

The cheque is fake; it bounces **after** the shopper has wired the funds back to the scammer. This leaves the victim out of pocket for the amount of the transfer.

How to Find A Reputable Mystery Shopping Company:

- Get the name, phone number and website address of the company **before** you send them any personal information.
- Verify the company's information against credible organizations:
 - Mystery shopping associations
 - Better Business Bureau
- Using the contact information **provided by the Better Business Bureau**, call the mystery shopping company and speak to the person who contacted you. **Do not leave a voicemail to have them call you back.** Fraudsters will always hide behind voicemail and blocked numbers. They will want to do the entire transaction via email.
- Search the company name online and see what others have said about the company.
- Search for mystery shop chat forums and ask about the company. Other shoppers are more than willing to tell you about their experiences with various companies.

Red Flags:

- **The person wants to send you money for work not yet done.** Never accept payment in advance for work not done.
- **Email Applications.** Never apply by email, always use an online application.
- **Never send money to a mystery shopping company!**
- **Email address that does not match the company name.** If you are dealing with XYZ shopping company, make sure their email addresses match. E.g. bobsmith@xyzcompany.com, never respond to generic email addresses (like hotmail.com or gmail.com, yahoo.ca etc.).

Mystery shopping is a great way to make an extra few dollars on your own time and many businesses use these services to measure service levels. We hope this guide helps you find mystery shopping companies like us who are reputable.

Remember: If it's too good to be true, it probably is!