



Cyber crimes have become so common, the FBI has created an Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) to address them.

According to its website, “From calendar year 2015 to calendar year 2017, there was over an 1,100% rise in the number of BEC/EAC (business email compromise/email account compromise) victims reporting the real estate transaction angle and an almost 2,200% rise in the reported monetary loss.”

The IC3 reports there were 9,645 victims of **real estate fraud** in 2017 alone. Imagine getting ready to close the escrow only to find the money isn't there.

American Trust Escrow takes the following steps to avoid having criminal activity perpetrated on you or your clients:

- We only provide our wire instructions via secure email or secure portal.
- We reach out to all buyers, sellers and agents at the opening of escrow to introduce ourselves and ask all buyers to please call us to verify wire instructions prior to sending any money.
- We have all disbursement instructions from the client notarized and then later verbally verify with the client.
- We call the client in our file directly on any email received instructing us to wire funds or change where we are to wire funds.
- We send out an introductory letter to the address on the tax rolls to inform the owner that we have a transaction in escrow.
- We do not hit reply to any email requesting a change to wire instructions.

If you receive a phishing email, do your part to put hackers behind bars—report the activity immediately to the Federal Trade Commission.