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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Date:** August 4, 2016      **Contact:** Kevin Clark, Enforcement Officer  
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**FRAUD ALERT: Online Home Rental Scams**

(Woodland, CA)- August 4, 2016 –The Yolo County District Attorney’s Office is warning Yolo County residents about a nationwide scam involving rental home advertisements on websites such as Craigslist. The scammers frequently copy a real estate listing from a legitimate website and re-post it, claiming that the home is available to rent and that they are the owner of the home. The goal of the scam is to collect a deposit or a payment from the renter before they realize that the scammer is not the true owner of the property.

These scammers often claim that they are unable to show prospective renters the property in person, making it difficult for renters to verify the seller’s identity or view the property before making a deposit or payment.

Common red flags of an online real estate scam include: 1) The advertised rental rate is significantly lower than the typical rent for a home of that size; 2) The property’s representative is unable to meet with the renter in person, often claiming they are out of the state or country; 3) The “owner” asks for cash payment upfront or asks the renter to wire money, especially through Western Union or Money Gram.

When considering renting a home from an online advertisement, never give out financial information and refuse background or credit checks until you have met the homeowner in person. Before making any deposits or payments, view the home in person and be aware of any differences in the home’s appearance or price. It is best to rely on a licensed real estate agent if possible in order to eliminate the possibility of online real estate scams.

Please contact the Yolo County District Attorney for more information on scams or to report suspected scams please call 855-4-YOLO-DA or visit [www.yoloda.org](http://www.yoloda.org). If you suspect a scam, you can also file a complaint with the FBI’s Internet Fraud Complaint Center at <https://www.ic3.gov/default.aspx>.

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