



FRAUD ALERT

on
Fake Sellers

We are seeing an increase in fraudulent transactions involving property with absentee owners. Transactions we have seen have some, if not all, of the red flags outlined below.

- Absentee owners
- Unimproved and vacant land
- Unencumbered property
- Deeds from the 1970s/1980s/1990s
- Documents in the title chain executed in an unrelated county or country
- Seller contact information from unrelated county/country
- Sellers unwilling to talk on the phone and only willing to communicate via email or text
- Real estate agents that do not know the sellers; all contact and communication between the real estate agents and the sellers is via email and text; the real estate agents are not based in the area of the property.

Agents should thoroughly investigate an absentee seller and not rely solely on information provided to them by

- Searching for the actual seller using public sources like Google
- Reaching out to the mailing address listed on the county appraisal districts website

What actions can the real seller take if they believe someone is attempting to sell their property without their consent?

- Contact local authorities to report the fraud attempt
- Contact local appraisal district and tax office to confirm correct mailing address

If you have a transaction with ANY OF these red flags, reach out to your Independence Title Escrow Team for further assistance.

