

University of Miami Medical Campus Crime Summary Report March 2010

****Tip of the Month****

MYSTERY/SECRET SHOPPER SCHEMES

There has been an increase in employment schemes pertaining to mystery/secret shopper positions. Many retail and service corporations hire evaluators to perform secret or random checks on themselves or their competitors, and fraudsters are capitalizing on this employment opportunity.

Victims have reported they were contacted via e-mail and U.S. mail to apply to be a mystery shopper. Applicants are asked to send a resume and are purportedly subject to an extensive background check before being accepted as a mystery shopper. The employees are sent a check with instructions to shop at a specified retailer for a specific length of time and spend a specific amount on merchandise from the store. The employees receive instructions to take note of the store's environment, color, payment procedures, gift items, and shopping/carrier bags and report back to the employer. The second evaluation is the ease and accuracy of wiring money from the retail location. The money to be wired is also included in the check sent to the employee. The remaining balance is the employee's payment for the completion of the assignment. After merchandise is purchased and money is wired, the employees are advised by the bank the check cashed was counterfeit, and they are responsible for the money lost in addition to bank fees incurred.

In other versions of the scheme, applicants are requested to provide bank account information to have money directly deposited into their accounts. The fraudster then has acquired access to these victims' accounts and can withdraw money, which makes the applicant a victim of identity theft.

There are legitimate mystery/secret shopper programs available.
Research the legitimacy on companies hiring mystery shoppers.
Legitimate companies will not charge an application fee and will accept applications online.

No legitimate mystery/secret shopper program will send payment in advance and ask the employee to send a portion of it back.

Thefts

03/02 Gautier Building

A male riding a bicycle removed the seat from an employee's bicycle locked to the bike rack on the east side of the building.

03/10 14th Street Garage

A catalytic converter was cut off an employee's vehicle parked on the 8th floor.

03/11 Dominion Garage

Employee reported that the catalytic converter was cut off and removed from their vehicle while it was parked on the 3rd level.

03/11 Bascom Palmer Eye Institute

Employee reported that a Dictaphone recorder left on the podium in the 2nd floor auditorium was missing. The item was valued at \$149.00.

03/12 14th Street Surface Parking Lot

Unicco employee discovered a broken window on his vehicle. A GPS and some CD's were missing. The items were valued at \$300.00.

03/12 UM Hospital Parking Garage

Employee reported that the catalytic converted was cut off of his vehicle while parked on the 6th level.

03/18 Lois Pope Life Center

Employee reported that a Dell laptop computer was discovered missing after it was borrowed for a presentation in a 7th floor conference room. On 03/25 the computer was located. (Solved)

03/18 UM Hospital and Clinics

Administrator reported that two Dish TV smartcards were missing from two televisions in a 4th floor classroom. The items were last used in January and were valued at \$157.00.

03/21 UM Hospital and Clinics

Employee reported that she discovered the driver's door window forced open on her car in the parking lot. A Tom Tom GPS device was missing.

03/22 Bascom Palmer Eye Institute

Patient reported that his sunglasses were missing from his rental car when returned by the valet. Item valued at \$250.00.

03/22 UM Hospital and Clinics

Manager reported that a Dell laptop computer was taken from his unsecured 4th floor office.

03/24 UM Hospital

Two contractors working in the MRI Center reported their Blackberry phones missing after they were left outside of the magnetic room while they worked on the equipment.

03/26 15th Street Garage

Employee reported that a raincoat was missing from the front seat of her vehicle parked on the 2nd level. There was no forced entry and the vehicle may have been left unlocked. Item valued at \$2.00. Investigation revealed the plastic raincoat fell out of the vehicle when the employee exited. It was later picked up off the floor by Unicco personnel as trash. (Solved)

Assault

None

Burglary

None

Vehicle Incidents

03/10 Sylvester Cancer Center

Visitor reported minor damage to the rear bumper of their vehicle left with the Valet.

03/10 15th Street Garage

Employee backed into another employee's vehicle while exiting a parking space causing minor damage.

03/10 UM Hospital

Transportation vehicle struck a parked box truck near the loading zone, causing minor damage.

03/12 Clinical Research Building

A trash bin fell off of a Unicco truck and struck the passenger door of a parked vehicle in the receiving area causing minor damage.

03/22 UM Hospital and Clinics

Valet employee backed a van into a palm tree in the valet lot causing minor damage.

Trespassers

03/02 Fred Cowell Mall

Security called regarding a male wearing a hospital gown sitting on a bench smoking. The male was contacted and escorted off the property.

03/05 Diabetes Research Institute

Security observed a male harassing passersby in the front of the building. The male was contacted and left the area.

03/10 Dominion Garage

Security observed a known male trespasser harassing passersby near a restaurant on the north side of the building. When the male observed security he left the area.

03/10 Park Plaza West

Security called regarding a male sleeping near the rear employee entrance to a ground floor clinic. The male was contacted and escorted out of the building.

03/11 15th Street Garage

Security observed a male jumping on cars in the street. Miami-Dade Police responded and took the male into custody.

03/23 Schoneninger Research Quadrangle

Security contacted a known trespasser and escorted him off the property.

03/24 International Health Center

Known trespasser observed by security on the front steps of the building. The male was escorted away from the property.

Escorts

University of Miami Security Officers provided escorts to any place on campus, including Metrorail. We encourage you to use this service when walking alone and particularly after hours. Security Officers will meet you at your work location and escort you safely to your vehicle, Metrorail, or any other building on campus. Call 243-6079 to request an escort. You may be able to reduce your waiting time if you call a few minutes before you are ready to leave.

During March, security officers provided 104 escorts with an average waiting time of 3:27 minutes.

General Information

FREE SECURITY SURVEYS or CRIME PREVENTION SEMINARS

Conducted on an individual or group basis. To make an appointment or to request information, call Lee Michaud, Crime Prevention & Training Manager at 243-5084.

CRIME TIP HOTLINE (243-6280)

Caller can remain anonymous. All information kept confidential. Ask for Craig Hopkins, Investigator at 243-6280.