

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **New Jersey Realtors Warns Consumers of New Scam**

Hamilton, N.J. (May 12, 2016) – Consumers beware, warns New Jersey Realtors, the state’s Realtor association. There is a hacking/phishing scam that has been wreaking havoc in many peoples’ lives, according to information issued recently by the Federal Trade Commission.

Hackers are becoming more sophisticated with their scams and have been breaking into the email accounts of brokers and agents, where they gain access to information about their clients, including contact details and closing dates. From there, they’ll often send emails directly through the hacked email accounts or create an alias account – complete with a phony website that looks just like the legitimate one. They’ll tell a client that there was a last-minute change to the payment method and ask the unsuspecting buyer to wire the money, where it disappears into the criminal’s hands.

“Buying a home is an exciting, monumental experience in any person’s life, and Realtors want to ensure it goes smoothly for all our clients,” said Tg Glazer, 2016 president of New Jersey Realtors. “There are many ways to protect yourself from becoming a scam victim. Most importantly, you should first establish with your Realtor how a transaction would be completed, so you don’t find yourself victimized in a wire scam.”

Here are some tips for consumers and Realtors to protect themselves from being victimized by this and other fraudulent activity:

- Establish early on with your Realtor how payment will be completed and never wire money.
- Never email your financial information – it’s not considered secure, and your Realtor should never ask for you to do that.
- A common scam is to receive an email with a message like: “We suspect an unauthorized transaction on your account. Click the link below to ensure your account is not compromised and confirm your identity.” Never click! Instead, call the bank using the phone number on your credit card or financial statements to report the scam. Also report the phishing

attempt to the FBI at [ic3.gov](https://ic3.gov) and to the FTC at [ftc.gov/complaint](https://ftc.gov/complaint) or to [reportphishing@antiphishing.org](mailto:reportphishing@antiphishing.org).

- Keep an eye on your email account and never click on links or files that look suspicious. Don't click on links or files from your contacts if you're not expecting them – reach out to see if they really sent the email.
- Before entering any financial information when you're shopping online, check to see if the site is secure – it should have HTTPS at the beginning.
- Update your browser, operating system, and security software to ensure the latest security settings are on all your devices.
- If you suspect you've been a victim of identity theft, visit [identitytheft.gov](https://identitytheft.gov) for resources and steps you should take to protect yourself.

*New Jersey Realtors is the voice of real estate for New Jersey. It is a non-profit organization serving the professional needs of approximately 45,000 Realtor and Realtor-Associate members engaged in all facets of the real estate business. In addition to serving the professional needs of its members, NJ Realtors is dedicated to enhancing the ability of its members to conduct their business successfully while maintaining the preservation of private property rights. Realtor is a registered collective membership mark, which may be used only by real estate professionals who subscribe to the Realtor organization's strict Code of Ethics and are members of the national, state and local Realtor organizations. For more information, visit [njrealtor.com](https://njrealtor.com).*

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