

FRAUD ALERT: Collaborative family law scheme

Fraudulent email requests to collect monies said to be owing under a Collaborative Family Law Agreement abound. Do not fall victim to these email requests. The emails vary slightly in their wording but have a common thread. The "client" advises that:

1. She is in Asia, Japan or some other foreign jurisdiction;
2. Her husband is in our jurisdiction;
3. She and her husband have reached an out-of-court agreement on their divorce - and have signed a Collaborative Family Law Agreement;
4. Her husband still owes her money under the agreement;
5. She wants you to help collect this money. The amounts to be collected vary from \$200,000 - \$600,000.

Sometimes the individual sends a \$125,000 cheque made payable to the law firm. The cheque may come by regular mail, from someone purporting to be the "husband's" financial advisor and/or company controller and was for monies owed by the "husband".

The letter accompanying the cheque had no return mailing address, nor did the envelope in which it arrived. The Lawyer determined the cheque to be bogus, as was the Collaborative Family Law Agreement. Both lawyers named as witnesses on the Agreement were family lawyers in Connecticut. However, their signatures were forged, and they had no involvement in the preparation or execution of the agreement. A follow-up call to one of the lawyers confirmed this.

Fraudsters will frequently use the name of a legitimate and existing company as the 'Payor' on cheques or bank drafts that it delivers to lawyers. The payor "company" named in this instance has the following fraud notice posted on its web site:

It has come to our attention that inaccurate mailings, faxes and e-mails soliciting investments, contests, requests for personal information and payment, and checks are being sent containing the Vertis name and/or logo.

Neither Vertis, Inc. nor any of its affiliates have authorized or are involved in these activities.

Please contact your local law enforcement authority regarding any communications that you may have received.

If you have any questions on these, or any other fraud-related matters, or want to report a potential scheme, contact Cynthia Nield at cnield@lians.ca or call 423-1300, ext.346