

## **FRAUD ALERT: Fake law firm site targeting lawyers**

A new level of sophistication has been added to the bad cheque scam, where lawyers across Canada have reported contact from a fake Toronto-based law firm named **Wagner Elliot LLP**, accompanied by a seemingly legitimate [web site for their “firm”](#). It is now known to be a ‘mirror’ of the legitimate site for a law firm located in England named [Alan Lowe & Co. Solicitors](#), and even features the same lawyers’ names and photos. After proving their existence, the “lawyer” from Wagner Elliott LLP then begins a fraudulent trust cheque, certified cheque or bank draft scam – details may vary among emails, but the basic formula works like this:

Following preliminary exchanges of information with regard to a potential case, the member receives a counterfeit cheque from the “client”. The member is asked to deposit the cheque and shortly after is asked to wire the funds back to their lawyer at Wagner Elliott LLP, based in Toronto as they have decided against the deal for which you have been retained. Subsequently, the deposited cheque is returned by the bank as counterfeit and the balance is debited from the member’s trust account.

Be cautious with all cheques received, especially if they exceed the agreed upon amount. Where possible, use the [Large Value Transfer System \(LVTS\)](#), an electronic funds transfer system that allows large payments to be exchanged securely and immediately.

To confirm the status and contact information for a lawyer in Canada or the US, consult our [Lawyer Licensing Databases](#) article.

*To report or seek advice on dealing with fraud and scam attempts, contact **Cynthia Nield** at [cnield@lions.ca](mailto:cnield@lions.ca), or 902 423 1300, x346.*