

# **Fides Insurance Group**

## **RISK ALERT**

### **No. 2021-05**

**Re: Invoice Fraud**

**May 4, 2021**

One of our parishes was recently the target of invoice fraud. The parish business manager received what appeared to be a legitimate invoice in the mail. The invoice was for copy machine toner that the parish used on a regular basis; however, the vendor was not familiar to the business manager. Upon investigation, the business manager confirmed that the parish purchased toner through the copy machine leasing company and did not use outside vendors for this product.

The parish business manager then conducted a google search and ascertained that the vendor named on the invoice was in fact implicated in many of these types of scams.

The scammer is betting on the chance that most business managers will simply pay the invoice without investigation. In this case, the business manager took the time to verify the legitimacy of the invoice, thus saving the parish \$1,000.

#### **Common Types of Invoice Fraud**

The products and services in fake invoices vary, but some of the more common include directory listings, printer toner, compliance services, signs, paper, and magazine subscriptions. Invoices may include threatening or confusing legal jargon to create a false sense of urgency to pressure recipients to make quick payments.

#### **Some simple steps will prevent you from falling victim to this type of scam:**

- **Investigate every invoice.** Confirm any orders with your business manager before making any payments, and double check your vendor information.
- **Prior to making any payment, confirm directly with the vendor.** Do not simply issue payment; confirm over the phone or email with your regular contact.
- **Do not share equipment information solicited over the phone.** Verify your supplier and any contracts with your business manager, as well as the status of supplies.

#### **Reporting Fake Invoices**

If your business or organization is targeted by a fake invoice scam, please contact Dawn Makusiewicz (d.makusiewicz@diospringfield.org) and consider contacting the following:

#### **United States Postal Inspection Service**

Criminal Investigations Service Center

Attn: Mail Fraud

1745 Stout Street, Suite 900 Denver, CO 80299-3034

(877) 876-2455

[www.postalinspectors.uspis.gov](http://www.postalinspectors.uspis.gov) 

#### **Federal Trade Commission**

Bureau of Consumer Protection

600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20580  
(877) 382-4357  
TTY: (866) 653-4261  
[www.consumer.ftc.gov](http://www.consumer.ftc.gov)