



Department of Energy  
Office of Inspector General

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## **FRAUD ALERT**

### **False Government Purchase Order Scheme**

The OIG is alerting vendors throughout the United States of a false purchase order scheme. The scheme consists of conspirators submitting false purchase orders to vendors through the use of fictitious email addresses made to resemble authentic Government email addresses. Specifically, conspirators misrepresent themselves and Department contractor employees to vendors and submit false purchase orders to vendors for products such as hard drives, computers, and toner cartridges. Shipments are routed out of the country, as vendors await payment.

Businesses can take proper precautions to minimize risks of becoming potential victims of the false purchase order scheme. Below are some potential fraud indicators.

- Incorrect domain names on websites, e-mails, and purchase orders are used by conspirators. As example, a “.com” or “.org” is used by conspirators to communicate, rather than a “.gov” address.
- The shipping address on a purchase order is not the same as the business location, as per the Department contractor website.
- Purchase orders request immediate shipment of goods on 30 day credit, pending Government payment.
- The delivery address is a personal residence or private-storage facility.
- E-mail are poorly written and correspondence contains grammatical errors, suggesting messages were not written by fluent English speakers.
- Phone numbers used and provided are not associated with Department contractors.
- Calls to phone numbers provided by conspirators are not answered.
- Purchase orders for unusually large quantities of merchandise are requested to ship priority or overnight.

If you believe your business has been victimized by this scheme, please report the incident immediately to local authorities, the DOE OIG Hotline, and/or the FBI. Early notification can help authorities locate and stop shipments before merchandise is shipped out of the country. Early notification may increase the likelihood for items to be located, seized, and returned. The DOE OIG Hotline may be contacted by telephone at (800) 541-1625 or by email at [ighotline@hq.doe.gov](mailto:ighotline@hq.doe.gov). The FBI has an Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) that allows businesses and private parties to report such matters. The website can be accessed at <https://www.ic3.gov/default.aspx>.