



BC Crime Prevention Association

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Q: After losing \$2000.00 to a scam, I went to report this to RCMP here in Richmond. I have not heard yet from anyone and I don't really know if I should do more or is it enough that I reported the company that defrauded me? I really want to make sure that this "ESSENTIAL RESEARCH GROUP" be known to all as a scam group. I have been a victim and it hurts.

A: The Essential Research Group is the subject of a report from the Calgary Better Business Bureau. It can be accessed at:

<http://calgary.bbb.org/WWWRoot/Report.aspx?site=154&bbb=0017&firm=56536>

Secondly, this particular fraud involves a Mystery Shopper scam that entices consumers into processing a counterfeit (forged) cheque. This was the subject of a very recent report on CTV's Olsen on Your Side entitled "Crooks capitalizing on your hard economic times."

You can view the coverage at:

http://www.ctvbc.ctv.ca/servlet/an/local/CTVNews/20081211/BC_olsen_scam_artists_economics_081211/20081211?hub=BritishColumbiaBin

The name of the company promoting the Mystery Shopper is different to the one you asked about but, in all other respects, the elements of the scam are identical.

Otherwise you have already taken the most important step by notifying the Richmond RCMP and the investigation will have to take its course.

In the future, remember that when your local bank lifts a "hold" on a deposited cheque, that does not mean that the cheque is legitimate. It can take an additional 4 – 6 weeks for the cheque to be processed at the original bank of issue. You won't know whether it's legitimate or not until then.