

# The Resurgence of the Job Scams

BY | Sharifah Roziah binti Mohd Kassim

## Introduction

Job scams, also known as employment scams, are a type of advance fee scam that targets potential victims, obviously job seekers, on the net. The scam poses as a recruitment agency from well known companies in the Oil & Gas, Cruise Liner, Mega Yacht sectors. They offer attractive remuneration packages and benefits when actually it operates with malicious motives to obtain money in advance from interested job seekers in the name of processing fees, work visas, travel expenses and so on.

## Observation

Our observation revealed that the scam targets victims looking for jobs in foreign countries such as hopeful immigrants or contractors and also targets victims from countries with high rates of unemployment. The scam usually involve attractive job packages in Europe, the Middle East, fast developing Asian countries with high immigrant and foreign employment rates such as in Malaysia and Singapore. The majority of victims are those from the Middle East and from Asian countries with high rates of unemployment.

As mentioned earlier, the scammer will disguise himself/herself from a recruitment agency representing well known companies both local and international corporations or multinational companies likes of Petronas, SapuraCrest and ECX Global. Based on MyCERT's observations, Oil

& Gas companies are the main targets for these scammers due to the many opportunities one can find in the Oil & Gas industry.

## Statistics

For the past one year, MyCERT has been receiving an increased number of incidents on job scams from Internet users and victims as depicted in Figure 1. Based on MYCERT's statistics (Figure 1), the total number of incidents received in the first half of 2011 had increased tremendously to almost double as compared to the total number of incidents received in 2010.

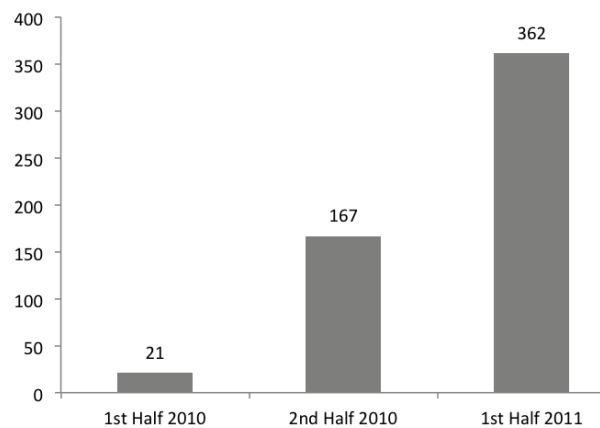


Figure 1: Statistics of Reported Online of Job Scam

In the first half of 2011, a total of 362 incidents of job scams were recorded while a total of 21 incidents were recorded in the first half of 2010 and 167 incidents in the second half of 2010. The incidents we received involved victims' merely receiving emails with attractive job packages purportedly from well known recruitment agencies. We advised

users never to respond to such emails or job offers. We had also received incidents of victims who had paid a huge amount of money to these scammers in the hope to get the job they desired. These victims found out later that they had been cheated. Such incidents will be referred to law enforcement agencies.

### Examples of the Employment Scam Email

---

Usually, these scam emails mainly comes in the form of an email saying that the recipient's resume was found on a certain job application website and the resume matches the skills/expertise needed by the company that the scammer uses to ply his trade. Attached are a few excerpts taken from various job scam emails received by users.

#### Excerpt 1

*We have verified your CV/RESUME at Naukrigulf and everything is excellent. In the below Message you will find the current positions where expatriates are needed in our Company.*

*All the positions include these below benefits:*

#### Excerpt 2

*\* It is of utmost importance to inform you that after the screening and scrutiny of your Curriculum Vitae with other verification procedures carried out, SAPURACREST PETROLEUM BERHAD (MALAYSIA), were able to resolve the status of your application.*

#### Excerpt 3

*After thorough review of your curriculum vitae in our labour consultancy website, <http://WWW.NAUKRI.COM>, I wish to inform you that we have oil and gas Job and construction Job Pipeline Engineer/ Piping Designer\*Petroleum Engineering, Procurement Manager,\*Driller /Offshore and Onshore Engineers, Construction Manager, HSE ENGINEER, ENIOR*

*PROJECT ENGINEER, Instrumentation Engineer, SENIOR LOSS PREVENTION/ SAFETY ENGINEER, Civil Engineer elated employment vacancies here at ( OIL AND GAS PETROLIAM NASIONAL BERHAD (PETRONAS) MALAYSIA...*

### Modus Operandi

---

The scammer will send an email to potential victims, pretending to be representing a reputable recruitment agency for a well known company. The scammer will inform the victim that his/her resume was found on the net and considered to be a suitable person for employment in the company. The email will contain an attractive salary package and an irresistible benefits plan to lure the victims. The emails mostly use Gmail addresses or a domain name that appears valid but is not connected to a Web address. This can legitimately be done through free hosting sites such as Yahoo and Google. An example of this is an email from <officemail@petronascompanymy.com>.

A questionnaire will be emailed to the victim and bogus telephone interviews may take place. Later, the applicant is informed that the job is his/hers. In order to secure the job, the applicant is instructed to send money in the form of an advance fee for processing their work visa or travel costs to the recruitment agency. Normally, victims are required to transfer money through Western Union or through a mule account registered under a dubious name. Once the money has been transferred successfully, the scammer will disappear. Attempts by the victims to call or email the scammer will end up with disappointments.

### Mitigations

---

Internet users, particularly job seekers, looking for jobs outside their country

must be very vigilant and precautious of the many lucrative job offers on the net that are too good to be true. They must always verify such offers by referring to the company's corporate website or verify with relevant parties such as with your local CERT, CSIRT or with your local law enforcement agencies. Double-check the contact information provided such as telephone numbers and the address given in the email with the ones on the corporate website. It would be safer to call and verify the contact number given on the corporate website.

Do a Google search on the company name or contact name to see if they exist or if there are any complaints written by others about this job offer. Users must never pay money, supposedly for visa charges or processing fees to a third party promising to find work for you or to an employer. Never give out your personal information unless you have verified the authenticity of the company's reputation and records. You must make sure you are using a secure mode for transmitting data such as ssl, https and email encryptions. Always look out for spelling errors, e-mail addresses that do not bear the company's name, domain and other inconsistencies that may be present in the scammer's emails or website.

However, if you were cheated a certain amount of money as a result of this scam, we advise you to lodge a police report at a police station nearest to your location. If you are a foreigner, then you can lodge a complaint to the relevant High Commissioner or embassy in your country. For example, if the job offer is in Malaysia, you can lodge a report at the Malaysian High Commissioner in your country. You will need to attach all relevant evidences related to the scam to support your report.

Internet users are also encouraged

to report to Cyber999 if they receive such emails for our investigation and analysis together with the full header of the email.

To retrieve the full header, please refer: [http://www.mycert.org.my/en/resources/email/email\\_header/main/detail/509/index.html](http://www.mycert.org.my/en/resources/email/email_header/main/detail/509/index.html)

## Conclusion

---

In conclusion, Internet users, especially job seekers must be careful when they deal with recruitment agencies that offer job opportunities and take all possible measures to make sure they don't fall victim to these unscrupulous con artists. It is important for the job seeker to always verify with respective parties of the authenticity of the job offer and never respond to the scam once the scam is verified. The best way is to refer to the corporate website of a company for any available vacancy and deal directly with the right person.■

## References

---

1. <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/LIVING/worklife/07/15/cb.avoid.job.scams/>
2. [www.scamdex.com/employment-index.php](http://www.scamdex.com/employment-index.php)
3. [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employment\\_scams](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employment_scams)
4. <http://1426.blogspot.com/2009/02/scam-petronas-job-offer-malaysiakini.html><http://antifraudintl.org/showthread.php?t=26326>
5. <http://www.mycert.org.my/en/services/advisories/mycert/2011/main/detail/815/index.html>