

Consumer *Alert*

TAX SALE AND MORTGAGE SALE SCAMS

Losing your home or real estate through a mortgage sale, foreclosure or tax sale is frightening. Manitoba property owners are falling victim to con artists who offer to help you save your property, but will only make things worse.

The offer may sound good, but it is probably a scam.

- The con artist may urge you to sign a paper that gives your property to the con artist in exchange for low or no payments.
- The con artist may promise to give your property back to you after you meet certain conditions, such as making payments in very tight time limits.
- The con artist may tell you this is just another way to secure a loan.

The reality is the land now belongs to the con artist and you may not be able to get your property back. If the property is returned, it may have no equity (value) left because the con artist could have mortgaged all equity and taken the money.

If you are contacted by somebody who says they will "help you save your property":

- Contact your lender. They may be able to work out an agreement with you that is within your budget.
- Get advice from a trusted lawyer or accountant.
- Don't sign anything until you talk to a trusted advisor.
- Don't trust any offer to lease back your property so you can buy it back over time. The offer may sound good but the conditions often make it impossible to buy back the property.
- Don't sign any papers in blank or with blank parts; information can be added later without you knowing. Demand copies of all documents you sign.

If you feel you have been the victim of fraud, call the police.