

NEWS RELEASE

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CEASE AND DESIST ORDER ISSUED AGAINST ELITE SUPPLIES

BISMARCK, ND - Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem today issued a Cease and Desist Order, banning Krystle Lester and her business Elite Supplies, of Anaheim, California, from doing business in the state due to alleged violations of the consumer fraud law and refusal to cooperate with the Attorney General's investigation.

Krystle Lester, doing business as Elite Supplies, is believed to be engaged in a so-called "invoice scam" or "toner pirate scheme" designed to deceive businesses into overpaying for copier toner that they never ordered or received. As part of a scheme to collect money, Lester sends unsolicited invoices to business requesting payment for toner that the business has never ordered or received. The Attorney General has received complaints indicating that Lester has specifically targeted libraries in the state. However, there is reason to believe that she may also have been targeting care facilities, professional offices, and other businesses across the state.

After receiving complaints against Lester, investigators from the Consumer Protection Division made contact with Lester, who, after vague promises to cooperate and provide information, responded by informing investigators that she had simply deleted all records pertaining to the North Dakota businesses that had filed complaints. Lester subsequently refused to cooperate with the Attorney General's investigation.

Stenehjem notes that any business in the state may be targeted by "toner pirate schemes" or other "office supply scams." The variations on this scam involve a phone call from someone claiming to be the business' regular supplier or an "authorized reseller" and asking for information about the company's equipment, names of purchasing personnel, or types of office supplies normally ordered, " said Stenehjem. "Once the scammer obtains this information, it then proceeds to send an invoice for supplies, which looks legitimate and includes information the scammer obtained from the business. These unsolicited invoices may also be sent out without an initial phone call."

No business is safe from this scam. However, according to Parrell Grossman, director of the Consumer Protection Division, there are steps a business may take to protect itself against this type of scams. "Designate a specific individual responsible for ordering office supplies, train all employees who answer the phone to not give out equipment information, like make, model or serial number, over the phone, and to refer all sales people to the appropriate person or department, do business with known companies or

ask for references, use written purchase orders and instruct suppliers to put purchase order number on the invoice, and do not pay a bill unless it matches your purchase orders and goods or services received,” Grossman said. Any suspicious incidents should be reported to the Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division at 1-800-472-2600 or 1-701-328-3404.

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[Krystle Lester - Elite Supplies Cease & Desist](#)