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# Batavia police headquarters now a safe zone in wake of Craigslist robbery scam

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Mark Gutman/Daily News  
 City of Batavia Police Department is now allowing the public to use its rear parking lot and vestibule to complete online transactions. The service is free and available 24 hours a day.

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BATAVIA — Buying a used car from Craigslist or any other online trade site has gotten a lot safer in Batavia.

City of Batavia Police has joined a nationwide initiative to make such transactions safer with a SafeTrade sign and a perfect location that should thwart any would-be scammers: Police headquarters.

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The department has offered its vestibule and rear parking lot for anyone wishing to complete online transactions.

The vestibule is open 24 hours a day and is under video surveillance. The area is marked with a SafeTrade sign.

The decision came after two men were arrested Jan. 18 and charged with conspiracy in what police believe was an attempt to lure would-be buyers of a pickup truck to Sumner Street in an effort to rob them.

The plan was thwarted when the buyers became suspicious and contacted police.

The two men charges had posted an ad for a “vehicle for sale” on Craigslist.

“It definitely precipitated it,” said Detective Sgt. Kevin Czora. “All we had to do was register the site.”

Batavia is now just the fourth department in the state registered as a SafeTrade zone.

Livingston County Sheriff’s Department, Cheektowaga police and Suffolk County also have SafeTrade zones.

Genesee County Sheriff’s Department is considering setting up a site.

The cost is free for both police departments and users.

Here’s how it works:

Agree to meet the buyer or seller of whatever you’re selling (or buying) only at the police station.

Meet preferably during daylight hours, though city police is open 24 hours.

Meet inside the police office if possible. Batavia has a small vestibule area for such transactions.

The initiative began in Milwaukee after a series of robberies connected to transactions on Craigslist.

The SafeTrade logo, which can be found online, can be used without charge to post on any ad on classified websites, newspapers or other publications to help buyers and sellers feel more secure.

For more information, go to [www.safetradestations.com](http://www.safetradestations.com).

Anyone with questions also can contact city police at 345-6350.

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