

BUYER BEWARE!! – Internet Safety

Buying a Maine Coon Kitten on the Internet in today's World

Scammers are out there everywhere preying on your desire to own a beautiful purebred kitten at a low-cost price!!

Be careful, be cautious, do not get scammed!



Pay Attention – You're smarter than that!

We have received calls and emails from upset people who have fallen victim to scam ads and fraudulent websites. These people have paid hundreds, sometimes thousands of dollars and never received a kitten. We'd like to help protect our potential customers against scammers who are looking to confuse and manipulate unsuspecting customers to make a quick buck.

Online Scam Artists

Here are some helpful tips and tricks to spot scam sites, falsified ads and give some insight into how scammers tend to operate.

These terrible people blatantly steal photos, content, articles, and even names, pretending to be legitimate breeders! In addition, they create quick and straightforward blogs, one-page websites or Facebook pages, and use other breeders' photos for advertising kittens. Scammers will advertise

kittens on classified sites, and other advertising platforms for as low as \$200.

There are times when a breeder may sell a “less than perfect kitten” or a retired adult for a reduced price, but be sure you are dealing with a known breeder. You know the old saying, *“If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.”*

Quality Kittens Are NOT Cheap

Maine Coon kittens are not cheap or easy to raise, hence why most professional/experienced breeders charge **\$2000-5000** and on up for their kittens. This is due to the amount of time, effort, healthcare and money that goes into raising happy and healthy kittens and maintaining happy and healthy breeding parents.

Things to Note

Below is a list of the most common mistakes and tactics most often used by online pet scammers. By keeping these in mind, hopefully, you will be able to spot a potential scam ad or fraudulent website. By finding a much “cheaper kitten” you may run into loads of heartache when that cute kitten you “thought” you were purchasing does not even exist and it was simply a picture that was stolen from an actual cat breeder’s website or off Google images or other social media.

Things to watch out for:

1. Bad grammar and punctuation. Starting sentences with non – capitalized words and using poor English.
2. Inconsistencies. By paying attention to a website, you may notice inconsistencies such as different locations, different phone numbers or no phone numbers at all, no owners listed or no cattery names being mentioned. Websites should be easy to use and follow and have all the information you need to contact the breeder. Be careful if the website tries to direct you to another site. Be sure you try to enter the website URL into your browser instead of just clicking on a link from another page.

3. No actual phone contact whatsoever during the purchase process. Customers should always be able to speak with the breeder before placing money down on a kitten. No excuses. You should be able to contact your breeder by several methods – phone, text, email....

4. Using Western Union, Money Gram, or other quick services. This can be a legitimate method, however, this payment option is nearly untraceable and the preferred method for scammers to receive funds. Look for breeders that offer Paypal as a payment option. Paypal is a safe and secure way of making payments. Paypal also offers buyer protection for transactions.

5. Text messages are the preferred method of communication for scammers who use cheap disposable phones that are untraceable. Again, you should be able to contact your breeder through text, but also phone and email.

6. The use of PO Boxes instead of an actual physical address. PO Boxes are too easily obtained and can disappear very quickly.

7. Scammers like to mention the use of a “shipping service,” “a shipper,” or they promise to hand deliver your kitten, sometimes right to your doorstep.

8. Beware of cheap or discounted kittens. Scammers often steal other peoples’ photos so beware of pictures that have multiple backgrounds or kittens that do not appear to be the stated age.

9. Beware of plentiful kittens. Almost all breeders are going to have an application process, and approval process and a waiting list.

Be very careful of Internet kitty brokers, they are everywhere and preying on their next victim.

What is an Internet kitten broker?

As you may have seen lately, many kitten brokers utilize social media sites such as Facebook and Instagram to sell kittens on at greatly reduced prices.

A kitty broker is a pet dealer engaging in the business of re-selling kittens who were born elsewhere. Unlike ethical cat breeders who own their own breeding cats and breed and raise the animals themselves, a kitty broker is

a middleman. These dealers/middlemen are usually easy to spot because they lack their own personal website and target buyers on social media sites. You never see photos of “newborn kittens” only kittens that are “*ready to go now*”. Some of these brokers import kittens from out of the country so they can obtain them at extremely low prices. This practice is on an all-time high and the health problems associated with the animals can be devastating, to say the least.

What are Digital Pet Stores?

We all remember going to pet stores in the malls when we were kids and seeing the animals. The question was, where did those animals come from? The sad cold truth is, almost all of them were brought there by animal brokers who obtained them from unregulated puppy and kitten mills. As you have seen in recent years, most of these pet shops have closed and several of the actual cat and dog breeders made national headlines with the deplorable living conditions they were raising their animals in. Government guidelines disabled not only these despicable breeders but the brokers who played part in the animal trafficking of these helpless animals.

Now we are seeing a new trend in digital pet stores. Animal brokers are buying cats and dogs from breeders in foreign countries, shipping them to the US, posting them “for sale” on websites and then selling them to you! This sickening new era is sweeping across the Internet like wildfire. Be safe and avoid Digital Pet Stores. If you can’t speak directly to the breeder who bred your new family member, who are you dealing with?

We don’t mean to imply that all overseas breeders are scams. There are many wonderful overseas breeders who are legitimate and have wonderful kittens.

Be Careful, Be Cautious, Do your Research!

Do not get scammed!