

## Modeling Scams

Avoid agencies that tell you there is a "registration fee" to sign up with them. Reputable agencies PAY YOU - not the other way around. Avoid agencies that say they are affiliated with any modeling school. Chances are they are actually only a recruiting office for the school, and will make NO EFFORT at all to help you find work once you complete their school. **DON'T TAKE A MODELING SCHOOL COURSE!** Talk to photographers and reputable agencies in your area first. Most will tell you that the school isn't necessary for the kinds of models they hire!

### What They Say vs. What They Mean

Unscrupulous model and talent scouts have their acts down pat. Listen carefully to read between their lines.

- *"We're scouting for people with your 'look' to model and act."*  
I need to sign up as many people as possible. My commission depends on it.
- *"Your deposit is totally refundable."*  
Your deposit is refundable **only** if you meet very strict refund conditions.
- *"You must be specially selected for our program. Our talent experts will carefully evaluate your chances at success in the field and will only accept a few people into our program."*  
We take almost everyone.
- *"There's a guaranteed refund if you're not accepted into the program."*  
Everyone's accepted into the program. Forget the refund.
- *"You can't afford our fees? No problem. You can work them off with the high-paying jobs we'll get you."*  
We demand payment, whether or not you get work.
- *"Commissions from our clients are our major source of income."*  
Our income comes from the fees we charge you.

What could be more flattering? Someone approaches you at the mall and says, "You could be a model. You've got the 'look' we're after. Here's my card. Give me a call to set up an appointment." People have always said you're good looking. Now, visions of glamour, travel and money flash before your eyes.

It's true that some successful models have been discovered in everyday places like malls, boutiques, clubs, and airports. But the vast majority of would-be models knock on door after agency door before work comes their way.

### It's All an Act

If and when you make that follow-up appointment, you'll probably find yourself in an office filled with lots of other model and actor hopefuls. Then the spiel starts. What you thought was a job interview with a talent agency turns into a high-pressure sales pitch for modeling or acting classes, or for "screen tests" or "photo shoots" that can range in price from several hundred to several thousand dollars.

Man, woman, or child — it makes no difference to bogus model and talent scouts. Often, these scouts are after one thing — your money — and will say just about anything to get it. But what they say isn't always what they mean.

Agencies and schools offer separate and distinct services. Make sure you know the difference.

- *Modeling (or talent) agencies* secure employment for experienced models and actors. Some agents require that you sign up exclusively with them; others may allow you to register with them as well as with other agencies in town.
- *Modeling and acting schools* claim to provide instruction — for a fee — in poise, posture, diction, skin care, make-up application, the proper walk, and more. Modeling schools do not necessarily act as agents or find work for you — after you take their classes, you may be on your own.

### Talent Tips:

- Steer clear of modeling companies that require you to use a specific photographer. Compare fees and the work quality of several photographers.
- Be suspicious if a company requires an up-front fee to serve as your agent.
- Be cautious if the school has a special referral relationship with a specific modeling agency. The two could be splitting your fees, or the agency may not be suited to your needs.

### Avoiding a Model Rip-Off

- Ask yourself, "why me?" Don't let your emotions — and the company's flattery — take control. Think carefully and critically about how you were approached: if it was in a crowded mall, think how many others also may have been approached.
- Avoid high-pressure sales tactics. Never sign a document without reading and understanding it first. In fact, ask for a blank copy of the contract to take home and review with someone you trust. If the company refuses, walk away.
- Be leery of companies that only accept payment in cash or by money order. Read it as a strong signal that the company is more interested in your money than your career.
- Be wary of claims about high salaries. Successful models in small markets can earn \$75 to \$150 an hour, but the work is irregular.
- Ask for the names, addresses and phone numbers of models and actors who have secured successful work — recently — based on the company's training.
- Check out client claims. If an agency says it has placed models and actors in specific jobs, contact the companies to verify that they've hired models and actors from the agency.
- Be skeptical of local companies claiming to be the "biggest" agency or a "major player" in the industry, especially if you live in a smaller city or town.
- Realize that different parts of the country have different needs. For example, New York is recognized for fashion modeling; the Washington/Baltimore area is known for industrial or training films.
- Ask if the company/school is licensed or bonded, if that's required by your state. Verify this information with the appropriate authorities, such as your local consumer protection agency or state Attorney General. Make sure the license is current.
- Ask your local Better Business Bureau, consumer protection agency and state Attorney General if there are any unresolved consumer complaints on file about the company.
- Get everything in writing, including any promises that have been made orally.
- Keep copies of all important papers, such as your contract and company literature, in a safe place.

### **Modeling Scams**

#### **Fraud Investigation Online**

#### **Modeling Photography Scams**

"The number one problem we see is big money wasted on useless photos that were sold to an 'unsuspecting' model thinking he/she was getting great photos." -- GO International Modeling Agency

"A legitimate agency does not charge money to be a model. You may pay for some test pictures, but it won't be more than \$300 for the entire shoot and everything." -- Joel Wilkenfeld, President, Next Model Management, New York, June 5, 2001

Some of the biggest modeling scams are modeling photography scams. There are modeling scam artists making millions from modeling photography scams. They travel across the United States, hitting many cities, finding 100 people in each city to pay \$1,000 for modeling photos.

The basic idea of modeling photography scams is potential models pay for modeling photos but they do not get modeling work. The bottom line in all modeling photography scams is aspiring models pay for photos which do not pay for themselves.

Modeling photography scams are probably the modeling scams most likely to trick model hopefuls. Aspiring models already know or quickly recognize the importance of photos to launch their modeling career. Photos, after all, are what modeling is all about. However, many times the models and their parents know neither how many photos they need to get started, nor the kind of photos required.

There are four basic quality and quantity issues at the heart of modeling photography scams: photo quality is too low; photo quality is too high; photo quantity is too low; photo quantity is too high.

How many photos do you need? What is the necessary quality?

The fundamental issues which determine the necessary quantity and quality of modeling photos is the purpose and target audience. There are really only two purposes and two targets. The purposes are model discovery and model promotion; and the targets are modeling agencies and the clients of modeling agencies.

### **Model Discovery**

One of the big myths which drives modeling photography scams is professional photos are needed to be discovered by a top agency.

Professional photos are not needed to be discovered by a top agency. It is the same for agencies which are not top agencies. Photos taken by a professional photographer are not needed for an agent to determine if the agency would be interested to represent a model.

A good agent only needs a few Polaroids, one of the face (headshot), and one of the body (bodyshot).

Top agencies do not ask for professional photos. They don't need them, and they don't want them, and they may even prefer not to have them.

Joel Wilkenfeld, President of Next Model Management, one of the top modeling agencies in New York, has said they don't want professional pictures because they can hide the real person.

There is usually makeup on the model in the professional pictures which were taken in a studio or elsewhere, but they don't want to see the model with makeup.

Polaroids of models without makeup do not hide the flaws. They supply what the agencies want: an accurate representation of the model.

Asked where aspiring models could go to seek representation, Joel Wilkenfeld said: "If you live near a major city where there are modeling agencies, you can go in and see them or send Polaroids to the modeling agencies."

Asked about the type of pics to send into an agency, and whether they needed to be professional, he said: "Agencies do not look for professional pictures, nor do we want them. We would like to see Polaroids with your hair pulled back and no makeup!"

After saying they preferred Polaroids, he was asked "Why do you only prefer Polaroids for pictures?" And his response was: "Because on Polaroids we can see all of the imperfections and we can see what you really look like. If you send us regular pictures, we will ask for Polaroids."

### **Model Promotion**

Model promotion after a model is discovered does require professional modeling photos. There are basically three kinds of photos used to promote models: comp cards, portfolios, and tear sheets.

Clients of modeling agencies want to see comp cards, portfolios, and tear sheets. Comp cards are an industry standard; so are portfolios; and so are tear sheets. Therefore modeling agencies ask for them.

There are modeling photography scams at both stages: model discovery and model promotion.

When models are trying to get discovered by a modeling agency they may be offered the opportunity to get professional pictures, which are not necessary.

When they are trying to get promoted after being discovered they may also be told they need to get professional pictures, which are necessary.

The difference in this second case is the claim is true (professional pictures are necessary), but the agency is not willing or able to find the models work.

Agencies which make money from modeling photos may be running modeling photography scams. Instead of getting money from commissions after the models get work, they are paid from photos before the models get work. This is the same as being paid up front.

It is a huge conflict of interest. Modeling agencies should not make money from modeling photos. They should only make money from the work models get.

Scam modeling agencies make all their money or a significant amount of their income from modeling photos, not modeling jobs.

Thus the scam is recruiting models to get signed by the agency knowing they will not get work, and the amount they pay for photos will never be paid for by modeling work.

Scam modeling agencies therefore have low standards on the type of models they select. They do not have to be selective. It becomes a numbers game: the more people they sign up, the more models will pay for photos, the more money they will make.

The incentive for an agency to find models work when it earns money from their photos even if they don't work is not the same.

The modeling photography scam of requiring professional photos to get discovered by an agency is not very subtle. It is a black and white issue, and it can easily be disproved by contacting an agency, or reading what agency leaders have said.

The modeling photography scam of requiring professional photos to be promoted by an agency is very subtle. It is not a black and white issue, and it cannot easily be proved by contacting the agency.

The difference between the two scenarios is the difference between proving the present and the future. You can prove if at present professional photos to be discovered. You cannot prove in the future an agency will not get a model work after the

That difference makes the second modeling photography scam much more insidious. It makes it very easy for a modeling agency to scam the model, and very easy for the agency to get away with the scam.

They may add the disclaimer in the contract, "There are no guarantees of work." But this is not the issue. The issue is what percentage of models the agency represents already got work. How many of the models who signed with the agency found work through the agency?

### **Modeling Photography Expenses**

One indication of a modeling photography scam is modeling photography expenses which are not commensurate with the type of modeling the model intends to get. Not all modeling pays well. Not all modeling agencies can get models high-paying work.

Paying \$1,000 for comp cards to an agency which is a promotional agency, not a modeling agency, is ridiculous. Promotional "modeling" pays \$15/hour. Therefore The model may never make more from modeling than the cost of the comp cards. In fact, the model may never even make anything. The model would have to work for more than 65 hours at \$15/hr just to break even and to pay off the \$1,000 comp cards.

Paying \$1,000 for comp cards when represented by an agency which gets many of its models high-fashion or high-paying work is not ridiculous. The cost of the photos can be paid by the first modeling job.

There are modeling agencies where models do not have to pay for their photos until after they work. It comes out of their first paycheck. This is the only way to check and balance expensive modeling photos. It does not put the model at risk or in a financial hole.

### **Child Modeling Photography Scams**

In her book, *The Modeling Handbook*, Eve Matheson writes: "Never spend money on a portfolio for a baby or young child. In three months they will look different. The pictures in your wallet will do just fine" (p. 120).

Tim Tew, a photographer in Orlando, Florida, has this advice for parents: "Don't let anyone sell you a thousand-dollar portfolio. You only need a couple of snapshots to find out if an agent is interested. Then a good headshot is all you need to get started" (p. 155).

### **Photographers**

The credibility of a modeling agency and the possibility of a modeling photography scam can be evaluated to some extent based on whether only one photographer is required or recommended. Reputable agencies should give a list of top photographers but they will not require one photographer.

The credibility of photographers can be checked by looking at the history of the photographer who is required or recommended. Get the photographer's name. Find the photographer's experience. Visit the photographer's website. Look at samples of previous work.

Below the **BBB record for IMTA** the BBB offered sound advice: "According to the Screen Actors Guild, a legitimate talent agency does not charge an advance fee for registration, resumes, public relations services, screen tests, photographs or acting lessons.... consumers should always pay the photographer and the printing company directly for any work done."

### **Photographers Split Fees**

There are unscrupulous photographers who split fees with modeling agencies.

#### Warning Signs

Warning signs of a scam or a less than legitimate or poorly run modeling agency. If you see any of these warning signs it does not mean the business is for sure a scam operations but be sure to ask lots of questions, be sure the agency has lots of good answers and always check references. New York City of course is the exception to many of these warning signs.

1) Newspaper classified ad or display ad looking for any kind of model or talent other than nude glamour modeling. Modeling agencies have plenty of wannabe's coming to them so they don't have to advertise for models. If they are short of talent they will send their scouts out to public places to look for potential talent.

2) Pictures of famous New York supermodels on the walls or their comp cards on a wall rack. I don't think Cindy Crawford needs a modeling agency in small town USA. Get real people!

3) Any up front fees. This might be signing fees, new account fees, evaluation fees, etc. If an agency has to charge money at the front end it means that there is not enough money at the back end. This means the agency does not have enough modeling work for the agency to survive on commissions and not enough work for a model to survive.

4) "We are interested in you but you need to test shoot with our photographer and it's going to cost you". Legitimate agencies will provide you with a list of photographers that you may go to. Many will have a place by the front door for photographer's business cards that you can take on your way out. You should be free to go to any photographer you want to. If the agency tells you that you must use their photographer, watch out. A new twist on this same theme is where the agency does not charge for the photo session but you have to pay a high fee (an example \$700) for a "professional make up artist." You will need photos at some point but you should be free to shop around and find your own photographer and make up artist.

5) "We are interested in you but you need to go through our classes first and it is going to cost you". Again

money at the front end = not enough modeling work at the back end. Combination School/Modeling agency has a conflict of interest and SAG (Screen Actors Guild) member agencies can not offer both.

6) "We guarantee you work". Modeling agencies are not employers. They represent you to try and get you work. Most of the time they don't know for sure what type of jobs will come in or what look may be needed, thus there is no way a legitimate agency can guarantee you work. The best they can do is give you an idea of their track record on placements. But, just like a warning with mutual funds, past performance is no guarantee of future performance.

7) "As it said in our ad in our local small town newspaper we guarantee you work, just like the famous models on our walls, just as soon as you go through our modeling classes, shoot with our photographer, and pay our agency fees". RUN do not walk to the nearest exit.

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### A Modeling Scam

This past week we had a newscast on a modeling scam. It was a Los Angeles operation that was targeting small towns in Oregon. They ran ads in the local newspaper saying they were looking for models for TV commercials. You were to send in some info on yourself and a couple of snap shots. After you sent in your info they would contact you and tell you that you had the look they needed. They then signed you up for a commercial paying the big bucks. They did need to do a test shoot before the actual commercial, but all of it was paid for except the makeup artist. They sent contracts, airline vouchers, and lots of official looking paper work. The catch was that the model had to pay for her own make-up artist and that they needed \$500 up front. The small town wannabes, not knowing how the industry worked and having a contract in hand, sent in the \$500. Of course once the check was cashed the scam artist vanished and the commercial, contracts, airline vouchers and the guarantees were all bogus. It is easy to con someone when they are not educated in an industry and, as the song says, "The lure of easy money has a very strong appeal."

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### Classic Rip-off

The following was emailed to Modeling Advice. She agreed to let me share this with others. This is not uncommon and shows what can happen if one gets caught up in one's hope for a career and is not ready for shysters that are out there. This young lady ran into one of the classic rip-off agencies. It began with a newspaper ad, and then having to pay for photos. They promised immediate work without even photo testing or much of an interview. This is not an illegal operation, just a rip-off.

She writes:

Hello. I read your section on modeling scams. I know this e-mail may be long, but please hear me out. I really need your advice on this one. I feel really stupid now. I went to a modeling/talent agency so that I could get my singing career started. I found this agency in the newspaper (one thing you wrote about). I didn't even go there for modeling I went there for the agent to listen to a demo tape I had done. He told me he could not do much for me in that field, but asked if I would consider modeling or doing commercials, etc. He told me I would have to take pictures and gave me a chart to look at. Three pictures cost \$475.00. I had taken a friend with me who advised me to do it, because through this I could always meet people and start my singing career. There were many other people in the office - for example, teenagers and babies. He asked me how I would feel about doing a fashion show this weekend and also said he got called for a video. Now, anyone who has met me knows that I am a bit shy and have low self-esteem, so why would you want me for this job? He even told my friend that I had to break out of that and be more aggressive.

Of course it was after I paid him that these questions ran through my head. I had never done anything so stupid and rash in my whole life. I think it was the rush of thinking I might finally go out there and sing. He didn't tell me that I needed to change anything about myself, which I personally thought was odd. He had the secretary come in and take one of the photos I brought in to FedEx it to the people making the video. Personally I think it was all a big act. He also said it was good that I lived in a particular area. He took pictures of me(I don't even know if there was film in the camera)and said I could come back in another day to take the other pictures. I was going back today, but got stuck on the highway and did not make it on time. I called and said I would be there in 10 minutes and the secretary told me that I would have to reschedule because the agent was going to a meeting, so I rescheduled for Thursday. When I had called to cancel the initial appointment she jumped down my throat saying that they are a professional agency and that she didn't think I was serious about this. But this time she most easily rescheduled, after they got my money. The contract he gave me said that they would get 10% of what I make. I paid with a credit card and called the company and froze my account, but it will probably go through anyway. I'm not sure if they are for real or not, because I just did this on Saturday, 4/1/00. I probably

won't be able to do anything about it now, but I still want people to know about this and to be more aware. What can I do as far as that goes? Maybe you can let the people know since you have a web site. What can I do to protect myself as far as this matter goes? I was also thinking about the fact that if he is not legitimate and he does have pictures of me would he use them for other purposes? I also called the Better Business Bureau and they said that this company has been around since 1993 and they have had 14 complaints in the last 36 months and they had responded to all of these complaints. Please e-mail me and let me know how much of a scam this sounds like if it is. I appreciate your time. Thank you.

There are lots of scam artists out there, as well as some creepy personalities pretending to be "photographers" or "agents" to lure young men and women into unsavory situations. Anyone can say that they are a **professional** agent or photographer -- but you need to do your homework and check them out.

The following are some "safety" tips to use in checking out and evaluation to see if the person you are dealing with is legitimate.

1) Always exchange phone numbers and addresses. Call a few times -- to make sure that the photographer is really "at" the number he/she is giving you. Don't settle for an "answering service" or "pager number" -- since these don't have physical business address phones of the photographer connected to them. Also send a letter to the mailing address, and then call with a question that could only be answered by reading the letter. (For instance, "so, which of the photos I sent did you like the best?")

2) Meet the person at a public space first to talk over the possibilities of you modeling. Say that you are in a rush and that you have other shopping / etc. to do -- and ask could they meet you for coffee someplace at a certain time. This is a safety precaution, because you can talk with the security of lots of other people around (including some friends "blending in the crowd").

3) If you have been contacted over the internet (and this person did not approach you in person & give you a business card) -- ask for a recent photograph so that when you meet (#2 above) "I can recognize and find you." This is helpful also to give to a friend / parent in case there is trouble at the shoot. It's easy for the police to locate someone if they know where they have their phone and what they look like.

4) Agents **MUST** be state licensed in every state that I know of (because they are able to form contracts in your name without your signature or prior approval). You can contact the state department of justice or the secretary of state for help in seeing if they are "registered."

5) If your state has a sales tax -- you can check to see if the photographer (or any other "product producing" business) is legit by seeing if they are registered to pay sales tax. They will need to post a sales tax certificate in "plain view." If you don't see one -- call your state's attorney general's office or the secretary of state in your state and ask if photography services are taxable. If they are, ask if the photographer is registered with a sales tax permit. If they aren't -- they are not legit (not paying taxes is not only unethical -- but it's also illegal).

6) Contact the photographer's / agency's / client's home-town newspapers. Do they know anything about them? Good deeds are often remembered (a plus) as well as scandals (run & hide quick \*grin\*). Especially in non-metro areas -- the newspaper writers usually have a handle on "who is legit" -- because they either advertise in the paper or have been featured in the news. Remember that you're looking for facts that ran in the newspaper -- and not just opinions. For

instance some prudes will dislike any photographer who does glamour, boudoir, or fine-art nude photography simply because they consider them "sex pictures."

7) Is there a BUSINESS SIGN outside? Is someone doing this out of their garage -- or do they have a separate building as their studio/office? While many professional photographers and agents work out of their homes (I do in fact) -- there should be a separate space dedicated ONLY to "studio/office." Also, there should be a sign outside the building which indicates that this is a BUSINESS location. In many larger metropolitan areas -- home businesses are greatly restricted -- and largely illegal or own or operate (because of traffic problems, etc.). A good indication of whether a business is legitimate or not is if they have a sign outside the building that is large enough for you to see from the road. If so -- they have likely satisfied the zoning requirements for running their business (plus it alerts the surrounding community that there is a "business" there).

8) Are they willing to provide model references with actual phone numbers? On the INTERNET, anybody can get a hot-mail address, and pretend to be different people of differing genders & ages. You want to TALK TO these references "in person." Again -- it would be good to get CURRENT references (models currently featured on the photographer's or agent's website).

9) Willing to provide business reference with actual phone numbers. Again -- if they are legit -- shouldn't they have "clients?"

10) ONLINE photos (or willing to mail you samples). Why on earth would you want to work with someone of unknown skill? Perhaps their work "sucks." Also -- check to see if they have a REAL DOMAIN (**www.TheirName.com** RATHER THAN **www.someserver\_someplace.com/TheirName** -- which is simply a "page" on the someserver\_someplace DOMAIN). If they have a REAL DOMAIN -- you can "trace" back to the registrants at INTERNIC -- and see if the site actually belongs to the person who sent you there (ha ha -- I've had lonely hearts link to my modeling images claiming to be "the model" in the photo -- it's a STRANGE WORLD out there).

11) List of the photographer's published work (if any). If it's in a popular magazine or in a book -- you should be able to find it at the library or in a bookstore. If they claim they can get you "into Vogue" and they aren't in the contributors list -- RUN & HIDE (grin).

12) A real business phone number? You can do a YAHOO YELLOW PAGES search to locate businesses that are listed in the local phone directories. If they are a real business -- they should have a business listing -- right?

13) Someone who knows the industry terms & business requirements. If you ask what type of model release is needed for the job, and they say "eerrr... Model Release???" -- RUN & HIDE (grin).

#### **1. Children are NEVER hired directly.**

Anyone under age 18 should NEVER contact an agency, photographer, or client directly. Modeling business professionals will NOT deal directly with a minor (person under the legal adult age of 18). They will only deal with the parents or the agency of the minor. It is DANGEROUS for any minor to solicit modeling offers or give out any kind of personal or contact information to strangers. If a minor is interested in applying to a photographer or agency, they must have their parents make the inquiry for them.

Most Common Scams

With young girls' desire to model being so great, they become vulnerable to all kinds of creeps and con-artists. The two basic scams are charging a model to become a model and the other more disturbing scam is where a photographer takes advantage of a model and gets her to do things that she doesn't want to do, either in pictures or after the shoot is over.

The first scam is really simple. The agencies usually advertise in the paper and they ask for models to come in or they have contests where most of the girls end up being finalists. Then once the girl gets into the office, the agent starts talking about how much it is going to cost to have pictures shot and to promote the girl's career. Sometimes they can convince the girl to spend over a few thousand dollars on headshots and bogus modeling lessons, and the girls never get work. All they end up with is a usually sub-par portfolio of pictures and an empty bank account. If a modeling agency seriously wants to hire a girl, they will tell her to get her own pictures shot, or they will hire a photographer for her. The girl will have a choice of who she wants to work with and the pictures will be done well, to her standards and the agency's. The agency will promote the model for free. They make money by getting the model a job, then they take a percentage of the income that from it. Legitimate agencies do not advertise in the newspaper or take out large, eye-catching ads in the yellow pages. They usually have open calls where you can come in and meet with a talent scout. If you already have a comp/Z-card done usually you can get in to have an interview with the talent scout. If you don't want to go to an agency then you can try to get work yourself. This leaves you open to the other more dangerous scam, though.

The second scam is far more dangerous and is becoming all too common through the internet, from what I've heard. The first scam leaves you a few bucks shorter and jaded about modeling, but the second scam leaves you feeling dirty and used. The scam works like this: a "photographer" contacts you from an ad you have placed in a newspaper or more likely, on the internet. He compliments you on your good looks and asks you if you want to be a model and you agree to do some shoots with him. These scams usually involve doing pictures for a website, and the photographer promises you will get rich quickly and get great exposure to start your modeling career, but none of those dreams are ever realized. When you get to the shoots you find that the photographer is wanting you to do things in the pictures that you never agreed too. You find that the outfits are racy and there is pressure to wear fewer clothes or sheer clothing. The pictures, although they are not nude, may have a sexual theme and may not be appropriate for the age of the model (if she is under 18). The photographers that are involved in this type of "modeling" are usually not professional photographers, only hobbyist or amateur photographers. They can even get quite touchy feely and they tend to not act in a professional manner. The really bad ones ask you to not bring along a chaperone, because they know what they have in mind will be easier if they only have to intimidate or convince you, instead of you and another person who's there to look out for your best interests. They may also do things like flirt excessively with the model and make her uncomfortable. You get paid your minimal compensation for your time (usually per hour or per photo) and the photographer sells the pictures on the internet for much more. So be careful!

This is not to say that there are not lots of real modeling sites that you could do pictures for in order to get some experience in front of a camera and also get to some money. Some of the sites have a members page to cover the cost of their sites, but they give away enough free pictures that agents can find you, and they often offer to promote models in offline venues also. They shoot pictures that are in good taste and professional. Sometimes the pictures may be a little sexy, but never distasteful or exploitive. One company I know of that is good is [www.mxphoto.com](http://www.mxphoto.com). I talked to Dave there and he is very professional and explained his site to me nicely. He has got real work outside of the site for his models and he appears from my dealings with him to treat people quite fairly.

Here is a list of things that you should insist on if you are considering working with a photographer/company:

1. Always insist on having a chaperone attend a shoot with you if you are under age, and even if you are of age you may want to have someone there with you. You need to be able to protect yourself and have proof if the photographer acts in an inappropriate manner. You don't want it to be your word against the photographer's.
2. Demand references and check them out! Talk to other models that have worked with the company/photographer. Did they get paid? Did they get paid on time? Was the photographer professional, did he/she do anything that made them uncomfortable? Has the company got any complaints against it at the local BBB? How long has it been in business?
3. Nudity is a part of modeling, but be aware of what you are doing before you agree to do the job. There is a big difference between nudity for a skin cream ad or artistic work, and nudity for a cheesy website. You should be aware of the details and purpose of the work before the pictures are shot.
4. Once a photographer shoots your pictures and has a signed release from you, then the pictures belong to him/her, NOT to you! Read the fine print in all your contracts and releases, and if you don't like something then don't be afraid to change it. Don't sign something that you do not agree with.
5. If an agency contacts you, then make sure they are licensed. Real agencies are licensed. If an agency doesn't have an license, what does it say about them?
6. If you have more questions about scams in modeling [CLICK HERE](#).

Other Modeling Issues:

Nudity

I have stated on my page and in my email repeatedly that I am not interested in doing nude work. I do not want people to take that the wrong way. It is not that I see anything wrong with models that do nude work, it is just not something that I am interested in doing at this point of my career. I think that nudity if done well can be very beautiful. I respect models that have the guts to do that sort of work. There is a difference between nude modeling and pornography. The difference to me is that pornography is made for the simple fact to get people sexually stimulated, whereas nude art or tasteful nude work has an artistic value to it

Beware of this scam and other's like this!!! I went to Japan when I was 18, it was truly the worst experience of my life! I first off was sent there without a legal work Visa. Once I got there I almost was stuck there. Once they get young girls over there they try to take away your plane ticket home and sell you on the black market! They promise you all kinds of money and a nice free rent apartment. The apartment is 2 rooms & no more, just 2 rooms. On top of Japan being a ugly & depressing country to begin with! Trust me on this! A friend of mine had his girlfriend sent over there and he had not heard from her in over 3 months. He was worried about her and asked me since I had been over there if I had heard from her. He said in the beginning she was sending him money and calling home on a regular basis. Then she just stopped out of no place. He said it was as if she vanished. He soon come to find out they had gotten her hooked bad on drugs and that is where all her money was going and also where they were making there money aside from selling her as a hooker. I think someone needs to contact the U.S Embassy about this! DO NOT fall for this joke and scam! If you have anymore questions please email me! And please spread the word about this scam.

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