

## BBB Advises Businesses to watch for Bogus Billings

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The Better Business Bureau of Minnesota and North Dakota (BBB) is being contacted by businesses in Minnesota and North Dakota regarding unexplained bills from a company called Minneapolis Classified Publishing. The businesses contacting the BBB say they have not dealt with this company and believe the billings are fraudulent.

“Based on what we’re hearing from business owners, we have definite concerns about this company and their billing practices,” said Dana Badgerow, president and CEO of the BBB.

Copies of bills forwarded to the BBB show Minneapolis Classified Publishing makes no effort to substantiate the charges, ranging from \$400 to \$500, outside of some vague language regarding an ‘initial set-up fee.’ In an effort to learn more about this company, the BBB called the toll-free number at the bottom of the invoices in question. An operator answered, ‘Career Classified Publishing Corporation,’ which is a company located in Chicago, Illinois. That company has a C rating with the BBB of Chicago, with six complaints filed against them – two of which have been closed as unresolved. Five of those complaints involved billing issues.

The BBB is advising businesses who receive bills from Minneapolis Classified Publishing not to pay them, and to report them to the U.S. Postal Inspection Service at 1-877-876-2455.

It’s against U.S. Postal Service regulations to mail a bill or invoice that is actually a solicitation, unless it bears a clear disclaimer that the unsolicited invoice is for information only and not a request to pay. The best protection against phony invoices is knowledge and vigilance. Businesses should alert their accounts payable staff to be on the lookout for disguised solicitations; carefully review invoices from companies with which they do not normally do business; establish effective internal controls for the payment of invoices, and verify all invoices with the person who authorized the charges.

If you receive a bill or solicitation you believe to be fraudulent, contact the BBB at 1-800-646-6222.

The mission of the Better Business Bureau is to promote, through self-regulation, the highest standards of business ethics and conduct, and to instill public confidence in responsible businesses through programs of education and action that inform, protect and assist the general public. Our hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Contact the BBB at [www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org) or 651-699-1111, toll free at 1-800-646-6222.