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Chong: Sometimes it's too cheap to be true

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KUALA LUMPUR: If it's too cheap to be true, it probably is, MCA Public Services and Complaints Department head Datuk Seri Michael Chong said.

His department, he said, received eight reports of online shopping scams with losses of over RM173,000 since January, the highest amount involving shoes worth RM100,000.

Chong warned that most of the scammers operated on Facebook

and attracted consumers with low prices for popular goods.

"Their *modus operandi* is the same; consumers will be enticed into buying cheap products, which will turn out to be fake or defective," he said at a press conference at Wisma MCA here yesterday.

He added that some of these consumers were foreigners.

According to Malaysia Mobile and Communication Association president Ng Keng Soon, the fake Facebook merchants woo potential victims with attractive images,

sponsored ads and prices at 10% to 20% lower than the market rates.

"In one case, a Facebook page was selling drones worth RM2,599 for only RM300 to RM400 .

"It claimed the stock was held by Customs, which needed to clear it," he said.

Ng said not only were consumers cheated, the scam also affected the business of genuine gadget stores.

"Consumers use fake prices as benchmarks and complain when legitimate merchants charge more.

"Don't be penny-wise and

pound-foolish, always question why goods are being sold at low prices and check the original brands' website to compare pricing," he said.

Sunny Koay, founder of Fonebud W, whose WiFi dongle was used by conmen to cheat consumers, said the scammers even spread false claims about the product in an effort to draw consumers to theirs.

"As a result, consumers were confused about the price and function of our product. They complained about us, and our sales dropped," he said.