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How to Avoid a Scam

Recognizing these common signs of a scam could help you avoid falling for one.

TO DO:

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What to Do If You Were Scammed

Find out steps you can take if you were scammed.



If You Think You See a Scam, Report It

Your complaint could help the FTC stop the scammers.

Social Security Scams



Scammers pretend to be from Social Security Administration and try to get your social security number or money.

Phone Scams



These tips can help you hang up on a phone scammer and hold onto your money.

Phishing Scams



Scammers use email or text messages to trick you into giving them your personal information.

Fake Check Scams



Scammers ask you to deposit a check for more than you are owed and send some of the money to another person.

Most Recent Scam Alerts

Caught in a bad romance

March 4, 2021

Blog Post

It's day four of National Consumer Protection Week and we've been discussing ways we can look out for each other during the pandemic. Today's topic – romance scams. Beyond the job losses and economic fallout of the pandemic, the loneliness and isolation brought on by our virtual lives has real consequences. This might explain why romance scams reached a record \$304 million in losses reported to the FTC in 2020. That's up about 50% from 2019.

Community Advocate Center connects more people to the FTC

March 3, 2021

Blog Post

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UPDATES

Browse Scams by
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Avoiding Scams

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Scams

Free Trial Scams

Gift Card Scams

Healthcare Scams

When ReportFraud.ftc.gov launched in late 2020, it made telling the FTC about scams much easier. But here's the thing: we know we're still not hearing from lots of communities around the country. Not hearing those stories means we might not learn about the problems they experience, or bring cases to stop the bad practices and get money back. Which is, of course, always the goal.

The Drug Enforcement Administration isn't calling

March 3, 2021

Blog Post

We're getting reports about scammers pretending to be Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) agents. They're trying to get your money and personal information, and using alarming phone calls to do it.

How to Spot, Stop, and Report Government Imposter Scams Infographic

March 3, 2021

Article

Scammers will call, email, text, or direct message you on social media. Learn their lines and how to respond.

No, the government won't call/text/email you for money

March 3, 2021

Blog Post

Lots of people are having trouble sleeping, thanks to the pandemic and all the parts of our lives it's affecting. And it doesn't help when you get a call saying you owe the government money. Oh, and, they add, you'll go to jail if you don't pay up immediately. That's a scam, and nothing to lose sleep over. For those who are a little more cut off from people than usual, these calls might feel more real and worrying than they are. If you know someone might be cut off from others right now, reach out to them to make sure they know these calls are scams.

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Help fight COVID vaccine scams: Share these tips

with those you know

March 2, 2021

Blog Post

Since the start of the pandemic, people are spending a lot more time alone at home. What's more, there's a lot of confusion about when, how, and where to sign up and get vaccinated. Add those two things together, and you get scammers taking advantage and spreading false information, hoping isolated people will believe their lies.

When it comes to scams, let's look out for one another

March 1, 2021

Blog Post

This pandemic has brought lots of side effects. Lost jobs, lost income, and lost homes are themes we see around the country — and scammers know just how to take advantage of these worries. Another side effect of the pandemic is isolation, which scammers also like to use to their advantage. During National Consumer Protection Week, which starts today, I'm asking you to join me in fighting isolation to fight scams.

Free winter weather emergency tips from the FTC

February 23, 2021

Blog Post

Winter this year is turning out to have its own set of weather-related emergencies — and right now, all in the midst of a pandemic. Lots of us are really ready for the winter of 2021 to be over. But while we're waiting, why not prepare (or see if you might already be prepared) for a weather-related emergency?

Utility scams are snow joke

February 22, 2021

Blog Post

Winter often brings the blues, but when it brings Arctic blasts, burst pipes, power outages, and even icicles indoors, scammers aren't far behind with weather-related scams.

They give love a bad name

February 12, 2021

Blog Post

Leaving broken hearts and empty bank accounts, romance scammers give love a bad name. Now that you know how many people experience romance scams, and how to spot the scams, take some anti-scam action this Valentine's Day. Whether you're wondering if that interesting person who just messaged you is for real, looking forward to February 15 discounts on chocolates, or thinking about friends who are out in the online dating world, here are some messages to know and share about romance scams.

Achy fakey heart

February 11, 2021

Blog Post

You've heard of romance scams. But do you know how they happen? They start when scammers create fake profiles on dating apps or social media. Then, those scammers strike up a relationship with their targets and work to build trust. Sometime later, they make up a story and ask for money.

Not love, actually

February 10, 2021

Blog Post

Valentine's Day is this weekend, so over the next three days, we're talking about romance scams. Lots of people have profiles on dating apps to meet someone — maybe even more so in these virtual times. And many people have built successful relationships from an online start. But what if, instead of finding a potential partner, you find a scam?

No new immigration relief yet

February 8, 2021

Blog Post

You might have seen that the President recently sent a new immigration bill to Congress. What does that mean for you if

you're a non-citizen in the United States? Right now, the truthful answer is likely nothing — at least not yet. But scammers won't tell you that.

Scammers are scheming as HealthCare.gov reopens

February 4, 2021

Blog Post

The Coronavirus pandemic has not only had a dramatic health impact, but also an economic blow as many Americans are now unemployed — and uninsured. As a result, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has re-opened HealthCare.gov for a “Special Enrollment Period,” from February 15, 2021 – May 15, 2021. This Special Enrollment Period will give people who need health care coverage the chance to sign up. But it also gives scammers a new chance to call, email, send letters and texts, trying to get your money — and your personal and financial information.

The top frauds of 2020

February 4, 2021

Blog Post

2020 was a tough year. Between the pandemic and the economic crisis, we all had our hands full. And scammers didn't take any time off either — 2020 was a busy year for fraud. In 2020, the FTC got more than 2.2 million reports about fraud, with people telling us they lost nearly \$3.3 billion.

The training program trap: deceptive financing

January 29, 2021

Blog Post

Have you ever thought about paying for a training program to learn how to invest in real estate or start an online business? These programs can be pricey — and some make false promises about helping people make money. In fact, the FTC has sued plenty of real estate investment training and online business coaching programs that have done exactly that, while charging people thousands — or even tens of thousands — for those

people thousands of even tens of thousands for those programs.

Avoid scammers offering to pay your rent

January 29, 2021

Blog Post

If you're facing eviction for any reason, there are organizations out there who can help you. But there are also fake "organizations" and "charities" who can hurt you. There are ways to protect yourself if you're looking for rental assistance.

Scammers cash in on COVID-19 vaccination confusion

January 27, 2021

Blog Post

With every passing day, the news on COVID-19 vaccine distribution seems to change. One reason is that distribution varies by state and territory. And scammers, always at the ready, are taking advantage of the confusion.

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