

## 1. Sample Phishing Email

**From:** security-update@micosift-support.com

**To:** [Recipient's Email Address]

**Subject:** Immediate Action Required: Unusual Login Activity Detected in Your Account

**Dear User,**

We have detetced **unusual login attempts** on your Microsoft account from an **unknow device** in a different location.

**Location:** Kolkata,India

**Device:** Windows 10 PC

**Time:** 3:24 AM IST

To **protect your account**, we have temporarily **locked your access**. You must **verify your identity** within 12 hours, or your account will be permanently suspended.

**Click here to verify now:** <http://www.micro-sift-security-verification.com/verify>

If you don't take action, you could lose access to your emails, contacts, and files.

Thank you for your immediate attention.

– Microsoft Security Team

**Attachment:** Account\_Verification\_Form.htm

## 2. Examine sender's email address for spoofing.

[security-update@micosift-support.com](mailto:security-update@micosift-support.com)

- By examining the email address it is observed that there is a grammatical error is seen suggesting that it is not a recognized Microsoft and from some shady organization.
- Microsoft never provides security updates or blocks account for account verification purposes, here, pressure is being created over the receiver to act upon the email by the mention of 12 hour time limit.

3. Check email headers for discrepancies (using online header analyzer).

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Header Analyzed

Email Subject: Immediate Action Required: Unusual Login Activity Detected

Analyze New Header

Copy/Paste Warning

Copy/Pasting a header works for most people, but sometimes it can cause problems with things like DKIM Validation. For the best results, use our Email Deliverability tool

Delivery Information

DMARC Compliant (No DMARC Record Found)

SPF Alignment

SPF Authenticated

DKIM Alignment

DKIM Authenticated

Relay Information

Received Delay: 0 seconds

From user-PC to smtp.fraudulent-mailserver.com

to mail.receiverdomain.com

0

0.2

0.4

0.6

0.8

1

1.2

Rate (Seconds)

Hop	Delay	From	By	With	Time (UTC)	Blacklist
1	*	user-PC 10.0.0.12	smtp.fraudulent-mailserver.com	Microsoft SMTP Server	[Mon, 27 May 2025 09:40:00 +0000]	<div>✓</div>
2	*	smtp.fraudulent-mailserver.com 203.0.113.45	mail.receiverdomain.com	ESMTP	[Mon, 27 May 2025 09:42:17 +0000 (UTC)]	<div>✓</div>

SPF and DKIM Information

dmARC:microsoft-support.com

Show

Solve Email Delivery Problems

spf:microsoft-support.com:203.0.113.45

Hide

Solve Email Delivery Problems

	Test	Result	
✗	SPF Record Published	No SPF Record found	<div>More Info</div>
✗	DMARC Record Published	No DMARC Record found	<div>More Info</div>
✗	DMARC Policy Not Enabled	DMARC Quarantine/Reject policy not enabled	<div>More Info</div>

Reported by [e.gtid-servers.net](#) on 5/27/2025 at 1:16:32 PM (UTC 0). [Just for you](#)

Transcript

DKIM Signature Error:

DKIM-Signature Domain dkim:microsoft-support.com:default is invalid - [more info](#)

DKIM Signature Error:

There must be at least one aligned DKIM-Signature for the message to be considered aligned. - [more info](#)

Headers Found

Header Name	Header Value
Return-Path	<bounce@microsoft-support.com>
DKIM-Signature	v=1; a=rsa-sha256; c=relaxed/relaxed; d=microsoft-support.com; s=default; h=from:to:subject:date:message-id; bh=XYZabc123...; b=FakeSignatureHere==
Received-SPF	Fail (receiverdomain.com: domain of microsoft-support.com does not designate 203.0.113.45 as permitted sender)
Authentication-Results	mail.receiverdomain.com: dkim=fail header=d-microsoft-support.com; spf=fail (sender IP is 203.0.113.45); dmARC=fail action=quarantine header=from=microsoft-support.com
From	Microsoft Security Team <security-update@microsoft-support.com>
To	victim@example.com
Subject	Immediate Action Required: Unusual Login Activity Detected
Date	Mon, 27 May 2025 09:40:00 +0000
Message-ID	<20250527094000.12345@microsoft-support.com>
MIME-Version	1.0
Content-Type	text/html; charset="UTF-8"
Reply-To	noreply@secure-verification-alert.com

Received Header

Return-Path: <bounce@microsoft-support.com>

Received: from smtp.fraudulent-mailserver.com (smtp.fraudulent-mailserver.com [203.0.113.45]) by mail.receiverdomain.com (Postfix) with ESMTP id 8A08C2A012 for <victim@example.com>; Mon, 27 May 2025 09:42:17 +0000 (UTC)

Received: from user-PC ([10.0.0.12]) by smtp.fraudulent-mailserver.com with Microsoft SMTP Server id 15.1.2242.4; Mon, 27 May 2025 09:40:00 +0000

DKIM-Signature: v=1; a=rsa-sha256; c=relaxed/relaxed; d=microsoft-support.com; s=default; h=from:to:subject:date:message-id; bh=XYZabc123...; b=FakeSignatureHere==

Received-SPF: Fail (receiverdomain.com: domain of microsoft-support.com does not designate 203.0.113.45 as permitted sender)

Authentication-Results: mail.receiverdomain.com; dkim=fail header=d-microsoft-support.com; spf=fail (sender IP is 203.0.113.45); dmARC=fail action=quarantine header=from=microsoft-support.com

From: Microsoft Security Team <security-update@microsoft-support.com>

To: victim@example.com

Subject: Immediate Action Required: Unusual Login Activity Detected

Date: Mon, 27 May 2025 09:40:00 +0000

Message-ID: <20250527094000.12345@microsoft-support.com>

MIME-Version: 1.0

Content-Type: text/html; charset="UTF-8"

Reply-To: noreply@secure-verification-alert.com

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- In this snapshot, it clearly observed that it failed all basic tests such as SPF record, DMARC record & DMARC Policy. It also fails Dkim signatures as no signatures are attached
- SPF record (Sender Record Policy) – It is a type of DNS record that tells receiving email servers which servers are authorized to send emails on behalf of a specific domain.
- DMARC Record (Domain-based Message Authentication, Reporting, and Conformance) – It is a TXT record within a domain's DNS that defines a policy for how receiving email servers should handle emails that claim to originate from that domain but fail SPF or DKIM authentication
- DMARC Policy (Domain-based Message Authentication, Reporting, and Conformance) - It is a part of the record that defines the actions to be taken with unauthenticated emails, such as rejecting, quarantining, or delivering them.

4. Identify suspicious links or attachments.

<http://www.micro-sift-security-verification.com/verify>

While observing the link carefully, few points are observed mentioned as follows

1. At the start of the link, the link works on 'http' rather than 'https', implying that the site does not use any encryption making the link unsafe for use & leaving the user data exposed and user data to be hacked
2. The organization the link is trying to impersonate tries to be Microsoft but there appears to be a spelling error, which in first look might seem like Microsoft, but the user would be redirected to fake Microsoft leading credential theft, user information leak, etc.
3. A simple search to WHOIS would also refer to the observation that the link is a counterfeit one and not registered to Microsoft

5. Look for urgent or threatening language in the email body.

“You must **verify your identity** within 12 hours, or your account will be permanently suspended.

If you don't take action, you could lose access to your emails, contacts, and files.”

- Observing the language of the, it is observed that the language is threatening and create a subtle pressure on the receiver of taking an action and click on the link as early as possible and making the receiver vulnerable.

6. Note any mismatched URLs (hover to see real link).

- The email contains a mismatched link, which is a common phishing tactic. While the visible text may appear legitimate, such as "Click here to verify now," hovering over the link reveals the actual URL: <http://www.micro-sift-security-verification.com/verify>, which does not belong to Microsoft's official domain. Legitimate companies use secure, branded URLs (e.g., <https://account.microsoft.com>). This mismatch is a clear red flag indicating the link may lead to a fraudulent site designed to steal personal information.

7. Verify presence of spelling or grammar errors.

“We have detetced **unusual login attempts** on your Microsoft account from an **unknow device** in a different location.

To **protect your account**, we have temporarily **locked your access**. You must **verify your identity** within 12 hours, or your account will be permanently suspended.

**Click here to verify now:** <http://www.micro-sift-security-verification.com/verify>

If you don’t take action, you could lose access to your emails, contacts, and files.”

- The email contains clear indicators of phishing, including spelling errors such as “detetced” instead of “detected” and “unknow device” instead of “unknown device.” The language is unprofessional and overly urgent, with phrases like “your account will be permanently suspended” and “you could lose access to your emails,” which are designed to create panic. Legitimate companies like Microsoft use calm, clear, and respectful language, avoid threats, and personalize their communication. The lack of a personalized greeting and the presence of a suspicious link further support that this is not a formal or trustworthy email.

8. Summarize phishing traits found in the email.

## Summary of Phishing Traits Observed

### 1. Spelling and Grammar Errors

- Misspellings like “detetced” and “unknow” reduce credibility and signal lack of authenticity

### 2. Urgent and Threatening Language

- Phrases such as “verify within 12 hours” and “permanently suspended” are used to create fear and prompt rash action.

### 3. Suspicious and Mismatched URL

- The visible link text suggests legitimacy, but the actual URL (`micro-sift-security-verification.com`) is a deceptive lookalike.

### 4. Unsecured Link (HTTP instead of HTTPS)

- The use of `http://` instead of secure `https://` shows the site is not protected, which is uncommon for real services.

### 5. Lack of Personalization

- No use of the recipient’s name or account details, indicating a generic mass message.

### 6. Spoofed Sender Address

- The email appears to come from Microsoft but uses a fake domain (`micr0s0ft-support.com`), often revealed through header analysis.

### 7. Failed Email Authentication Checks

- Header analysis would likely show SPF, DKIM, and DMARC failures, confirming the sender is not authorized.