



SCAM WATCH

What to look out for

Five common scammer methods to avoid

- 1. Poor spelling or grammar in emails:** Scammers will often produce misspellings in their email in an effort to avoid triggering spam filters for common keywords in their messages – they are savvy and can spell – rather, what you are seeing is a sophisticated attempt to maximize the reach of their messages within as many inboxes as possible. Most commonly the spelling will be off on words such as “pharmacy”, “money”, “gambling” or related “sin” industries that are commonly promoted via spam.
- 2. Surrogate representation:** Any time that you are dealing with a person who claims they are a stand-in for the person you originally attempted to contact, whatever the reason given (vacation, sickness, etc.), you should be wary and watch out for a possible scam. Always make direct contact with the person whom you intended to work with, as this is the most surefire way to guarantee legitimacy. Seek out references with anyone you work with, and call a company to verify a new employee in case you are assigned a new point of contact.
- 3. Inheritance scams:** Common scams today are emails wherein individuals claim to be heirs to a fortune that they cannot access. Whenever you get an email like this, you need to invoke your own internal scam watch. Most commonly, they will request your bank information so that they can wire you some money – never give out any financial information. In other variants of the scam, you may be requested to send an initial forwarding loan amount in exchange for the right to a piece of the larger fortune, but you should never send any payment either, especially by wire or cash.
- 4. Low, low prices:** Often, companies will have offers with prices that are much below the standard market price. If prices seem too low, they may very well signal a scam. You should do due diligence on the background on the company, including verified 3rd party reviews. Quite often you’ll see these low prices on electronics from Asian distributors. Name brand electronics are rarely marked below certain prices, while unknown manufacturer names should also be a source of caution. Even if an unknown manufacturer really delivers, you need to ensure quality, warranties and return policies.
- 5. Cheap, fast loans:** You’ll often see offers for loans that will pay out nearly instantly – these should again be signals for you to be cautious. Never accept a loan from anyone other than a reputable institution that provides the necessary safeguards and guarantees. Payday loan scams are a common form of scams, especially if they ask for upfront payment or a “good faith” advance. Instead, work with well-known credit companies or banks if you’re in need of short term financing.