

Identity Theft

AVOIDING SCAMS

Running a scam or fraud is another time-tested method for identity thieves. They may contact you in person, by phone/robocall, mail, online or social media to try to trick you into giving out personal information. Here are some tips to stay safe and avoid scams.

- Be aware of current scams. Watch or read the news. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC), offers information and tips on current scams at consumer.ftc.gov/scams. The FBI also offers tips and prevention information about scams at uspis.gov.
- Before divulging personal information to anyone, know who you're dealing. Independently verify any information provided. Find the physical address and phone number of who contacted you by yourself. Don't trust email addresses given by unknown people. Search online for a company name and website. Read through the site and read any online reviews of the person or business.
- Never reply to messages asking for personal information, whether the message was sent over the phone or by email, text or through an ad. Do not call phone numbers or click on links containing these messages. You could be a target of phishing.
- Never send money or account information in reply to a notice that you won a prize or lottery.
- Give only to established charities. Avoid pop-up charities that suddenly appear after disasters. Check a charity's trustworthiness with the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance site at give.org.

- Don't fall for pressure tactics. Never react quickly or impulsively to offers or requests.
- Be wary of "impostor" scams in which a scammer pretends to be someone close to you or an entity you're unlikely to question. Fraudsters pretend to be family members, friends, love interests, government agencies or companies often trying to get personal information.

To report a scam or fraud, contact:

- The local police department and state Attorney General's office
- The Federal Trade Commission reportfraud.ftc.gov | [1.877.FTC.HELP](tel:1877FTCHELP)
- The Internet Crime Complaint Center ic3.gov (online related)
- The US Postal Inspection Service uspis.gov | [1.877.876.2455](tel:18778762455) (mail related)

To report other types of fraud, visit the US Department of Justice at justice.gov/criminal-fraud/report-fraud