

consumer action

Education and advocacy since 1971

Resources for Learning About Scams

(Download this resource sheet at: www.consumer-action.org/outreach/articles/resources_for_learning_about_scams)

1) Just Say No to Scams, Consumer Action (Educational module designed to educate and empower consumers to recognize and avoid all types of scams, whether perpetrated online, by phone or mail, or in person.)

- **Module webpage:** www.consumer-action.org/modules/module_scams
- **10-page guide for consumers:** https://www.consumer-action.org/modules/articles/scams_guide
- **Two-page "Quick Tips" sheet:** www.consumer-action.org/modules/articles/scams_tip_sheet
- **23-page compendium of scams:** https://www.consumer-action.org/modules/articles/common_scams

2) Steering clear of pandemic-related scams, Consumer Action (Fact sheet highlights some of the most common types of scams related to the pandemic, helps spot and avoid scams, and explains where to report scam attempts.)

https://consumer-action.org/english/articles/Scams_COVID

3) SCAM GRAM, Consumer Action (Monthly newsletter alerting the public to the dirtiest players in the world of tech fraud, credit card scams, ID theft and general con-artistry.)

www.consumer-action.org/news/scam-gram

4) How to Recognize and Avoid Phishing Scams, FTC, May 2019 (Includes information on where to report phishing scams and where to find information on preventing identity theft.)

www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/how-recognize-and-avoid-phishing-scams

5) IRS's tax scams resources (Includes information about phone, email, and social media scams, charity scams and more.)

- **IRS's "Dirty Dozen" tax scams page:** www.irs.gov/newsroom/dirty-dozen
- **Fake charities news release, 11/30/21:** www.irs.gov/newsroom/national-tax-security-awareness-week-day-2-giving-tuesday-reminder-that-scammers-can-use-fake-charities-to-get-sensitive-information
- **Where to report tax scams:** www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/tax-scams-how-to-report-them

6) Tips for Victims of Unemployment Benefit Fraud, Ann Carrns, The New York Times, 9/3/21

www.nytimes.com/2021/09/03/your-money/unemployment-insurance-benefits-fraud.html

7) Common Scams and Crimes, FBI (List of common scams and crimes that the FBI encounters, as well as tips to help prevent being victimized; scam topics include advance fee schemes, romance scams, money mule scams, investment schemes, and more.)

www.fbi.gov/scams-and-safety/common-scams-and-crimes

8) Avoiding and Reporting Scams, FTC (Browse articles, alerts and blog posts on phishing, prize and grant, money-making opportunity, charity, government impersonator, and many more scams.)

www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/scam-alerts

9) Data Spotlight, FTC (Blog explores consumer protection topics based on trends in national and state fraud report data from the FTC's Consumer Sentinel database; recent titles include "Scammers prefer gift cards, but not just any card will do," "Amazon tops list of impersonated businesses," "Cryptocurrency buzz drives record investment scam losses," and "Romance scams take record dollars in 2020.")

www.ftc.gov/news-events/blogs/data-spotlight

10) Top Holiday Scams to Avoid, Los Angeles County Consumer & Business Affairs, 12/1/21 (Discusses several scams, and links to the agency's "Donate Wisely to Disaster Charities" fact sheet and to Southern California Edison's "'Tis the Season to Avoid Utility Scam Calls" webpage.)

<https://dcba.lacounty.gov/newsroom/top-holiday-scams-to-avoid/>

11) Sales scam resources

- **Online Shopping**, FTC, May 2021: www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/online-shopping

- **Celebrate Hanukkah without the scams**, FTC, 11/24/21 (Includes tips everyone can use to avoid scammers when shopping online.) www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2021/11/celebrate-hanukkah-without-scams

- **What to consider before buying a concert ticket from a stranger**, CNBC, 8/3/18: www.cnbc.com/2018/07/31/what-to-consider-before-buying-a-concert-ticket-from-a-stranger.html

- **Get the dog or cat instead of the scam**, FTC, 11/12/21: www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2021/11/get-dog-or-cat-instead-scam

- **Puppy Scams: How to Protect Yourself from Fake Online Pet Sellers**, Better Business Bureau, 11/10/17: www.bbb.org/article/scams/14213-puppy-scams-how-to-protect-yourself-from-fake-online-pet-sellers

12) What To Do if You Were Scammed, FTC, 10/2020 (Describes steps consumers can take if they gave a scammer money, personal information, or access to a computer or phone.)

www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/what-do-if-you-were-scammed

13) Getting Money Back for Scammed Consumers, National Consumer Law Center, 12/15/20 (Although geared primarily to attorneys, this publication helps answer a key question about scams that everyone likely has: Can scammed consumers ever get their money back? If so, when and how?)

<https://library.nclc.org/getting-money-back-scammed-consumers>

14) Where to report scams:

- **ReportFraud.ftc.gov**, FTC (Report fraud, scams, and bad business practices.) <https://reportfraud.ftc.gov>

- **Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3)**, FBI (Interagency website run by the National White Collar Crime Center and the FBI.) www.ic3.gov

- **California Attorney General's Protecting Consumers webpage** (Provides information about submitting consumer complaints to the Attorney General.) <https://oag.ca.gov/consumers>

- **Los Angeles County Consumer & Business Affairs** (800-593-8222) (Investigates many types of complaints, including consumer fraud, real estate fraud, immigration services fraud, identity theft, and elder financial abuse.) <https://dcba.lacounty.gov/our-services/>

15) Annual Credit Report Request Form (Consumers can order free annual credit reports from the three national credit bureaus by phone, at 877-322-8228; online, at www.annualcreditreport.com; or by using this downloadable Annual Credit Report Request Form.)

Mail-in form: www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/pdf-0093-annual-report-request-form.pdf

16) Freeze Your Credit File: Leave ID thieves out in the cold, Consumer Action (Fact sheet explains how consumers can "freeze" their credit files, which prevents new credit from being established in their name.)

www.consumer-action.org/english/articles/freeze_your_credit_file

17) National Consumers League (Stay ahead of trending scams by signing up for Fraud.org monthly fraud alerts, and read about the latest tricks and tactics on NCL's website.)

<https://fraud.org/category/fraud-alerts>

18) Better Business Bureau's Scam Tracker (Report and read about scams in your area in real time.)

www.bbb.org/scamtracker

Submit consumer complaints to our information and referral hotline: www.consumer-action.org/hotline/complaint_form or 415-777-9635. Chinese, English and Spanish spoken.