



DON'T BE A TARGET

Top Six (6) Scams to Look For in 2024

A scam is any illegal means used by an individual or entity to get money or some other benefit from another individual or entity. Scams can occur over the phone, through the mail, over the internet or in person. Scammers pose as people, agencies and companies in order to gain the trust of intended victims. Scammers and their schemes are becoming more difficult to detect because they work hard to perfect their illicit plots taking advantage of innovations in technology to better manipulate their targets. This newsletter provides some insight into the top six (6) scams to watch out for in 2024. **BE ON YOUR GUARD!**

CHEQUE COOKING SCAM

In previous times, the popular scam was cheque washing where thieves stole actual cheques from mailboxes and even mail carriers. The cheques were then washed with special chemicals to keep the signature but erasing the amount and the payee so that they could fill in a new name and amount.

Scammers have now discovered a cleaner way to steal and manipulate cheques. In cheque cooking, thieves take a digital photo of a stolen cheque and use commercially available software to change the details. Scammers then print a fake cheque or deposit it using the bank's mobile app.

WORK FROM HOME SCAM

In these scams, a Help Wanted advertisement is posted online usually via social media looking for employees to work for a company that promises wealth and success and a large salary for doing part-time work. The advertisement requests that new employees must send funds to receive tools such as uniforms, training material and computer programs. The scammers also ask for bank account information. The scammers keep the money and the victims never hear from them again.

DELAYED ACTION SWEEPSTAKES SCAM

Scammers call or write to individuals informing them that they have won a fortune. Recently, a new variation has emerged where the scammers ask for personal information for validation purposes. Instead of quickly emptying the bank account (smash and grab), they make small deductions to see whether they would be noticed. Once they have free reign, they continue to use the account to get lines of credit and other funds to get a bigger pay out later on.

STAYING SAFE FROM CHEQUE COOKING SCAMS

Individuals should consider using a safer payment method such as credit or debit cards. However, if cheques are being used, drop them off directly to the payee or at the nearest post office. Individuals should regularly monitor the chequing account for any suspicious activity and report any concerns promptly to the financial institution.



STAYING SAFE FROM WORK FROM HOME SCAMS

Legitimate employers do not charge for hiring or to get the job started. Always research all job listings and conduct research on the company. Do not send personal and banking information or any funds in response to these advertisements.



STAYING SAFE FROM DELAYED ACTION SWEEPSTAKES SCAMS

If it seems too good to be true, it usually is. If calls, emails or letters are received claiming that prizes and money are won, the safest route to take is to ignore it. Never provide personal information.



VIRTUAL CELEBRITY SCAM

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many stars opted to stay connected with their fans by streaming online concerts and other events on social media. This scam involves an individual pretending to be a celebrity who reaches out to a targeted person. They may send a message such as “Beyonce loves your comments” or “She would love to talk to you.” After making the connection, the celebrity imposter then expertly steers the conversation to how his/her fortune is tied up in a lawsuit and humbly requests a loan or a similar need for money from the eager and star-struck victim.

PARIS OLYMPICS SCAM

Scammers try to find ways to exploit upcoming big events. With the Paris Olympic Games coming up in the summer of 2024, look out for fake emergency scams. In this scam, an individual’s email address is hacked and shortly after all of the contacts will receive a message saying, “Hey guys, I’m in Paris and my wallet got stolen! Can anyone help me out by sending gift cards or a deposit?” Also, officials of the Olympic Games are also warning the public about bogus ticketing sites and emails purporting to be from the Olympic Committee or the official website.

PARCEL DELIVERY SCAM

The internet is a massive shopping outlet and so scammers are using the opportunity to manipulate unsuspecting shoppers through parcel delivery scams. During these scams, criminals pose as legitimate delivery companies to manipulate victims into paying additional fees to reschedule a delivery and requesting personal and banking information to complete the necessary transaction.

SIGNS OF A POTENTIAL SCAM ATTEMPT

- 1) You have been asked to wire money or send cheques and money orders by courier or overnight delivery. Scammers request these routes so they can get the money before you realize you have been cheated.
- 2) You have been asked to pay before collecting winnings. Legitimate sweepstakes do not require payments for insurance, taxes or shipping to claim a prize.
- 3) They claim to be employed by a government agency. Scammers may try to tell you they work with the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) or Customs. Government agencies do not run or operate sweepstakes.
- 4) They want you to act promptly. The more time you have, the more likely that you figure out that someone is trying to scam you.
- 5) They claim to be someone you care about.
- 6) If it seems too good to be true, it probably is.



STAYING SAFE FROM VIRTUAL CELEBRITY SCAMS

If a direct message is received from someone claiming to be a famous performer or celebrity or a representative for them, be on your guard. It is almost always a scam.



STAYING SAFE FROM PARIS OLYMPIC SCAMS

Corroborate any emails or messages from friends requiring funds by calling or finding out from close family members and other trusted sources if they have travelled recently. When visiting the ticketing site, never provide log in details and passwords or banking details. If this information is requested, the site is most likely fake.



STAYING SAFE FROM PARCEL DELIVERY SCAMS

Always contact the customer service department of the shopping website to verify whether there were any changes made to the order. Use the order’s official tracking number to see the current status of the order. Do not provide personal or banking information if responding to the messages.

TIPS FOR RECOGNISING AND AVOIDING SCAMS

- 1) An offer seems too good to be true.
- 2) Communication doesn't appear to be genuine.
- 3) Do not send money to someone you do not know.
- 4) You have been asked for personal information.
- 5) Do not reply to email messages or phone calls that ask for financial information or Social Security numbers.
- 6) Resist the pressure to act immediately. Always tell the caller that you need time to think things through.
- 7) Do not open attachments or links that come from strange emails.
- 8) Do not agree to deposit checks from individuals that you do not know.
- 9) Research charities and other organizations before making donations.

