

Better Business Bureau Releases “Twelve Scams of Christmas”

Buyers beware! There are always scammers out there looking to make a few extra dollars. The Better Business Bureau released their list of the top holiday scams to look out for this holiday season.

Malware e-cards: Viruses and malware often travel in e-mail attachments or links. Don't click on an e-mail from someone you don't know or a name you don't recognize. When in doubt, delete the e-card or e-mail.

Stranded grandkids: It's the classic "grandparent scam". If your grandchild, relative or friend calls or send you an e-mail saying they were robbed or hurt overseas, check to verify it's true before wiring money.

Counterfeit gifts: Low prices on luxurious goods are almost always cheap counterfeits. At best, you'll look like a Scrooge.

Pickpockets: When out shopping, keep your purse or wallet secure. Don't get overburdened or put shopping bags down, even for a moment. Thieves are watching and waiting for the perfect moment to snatch up your items, wallet or purse.

Stolen gift cards: If you are buying gift cards for someone this holiday season, make sure you are buying from reputable dealers, not online or from individuals. It's easy for a scammer to sell you the card and then use the funds before you even have the chance to give the card as a gift.

Fake coupons: Be cautious when downloading coupons. Always make sure you are at a retailer's real website. Be especially careful with coupon sites that ask for personal information.

Santa scammers: What could be more jolly than a letter from Santa addressed directly to your child? Make sure the site is real and not gathering your data for identity theft purposes.

Fake charities: Charities count on end-of-year giving, so be generous if you can. But be careful too, because scammers set up fake charities that often have similar sounding names to legitimate charities.

Bogus websites: It's easy to mimic a real website, with logos and everything. Some red flags you might be on a copy website are: if http is displayed in the address bar instead of the more secure https, the website does not list contact information or they are asking for payment by wire or money card.

Travel scams: With busy holiday travel, bargains on airfare or trips may be tempting. Be cautious when booking through online ads, never wire money to someone you don't know and ask for references of trusted travel agencies or website from friends and family members.

Romance scams: Everyone wants a special someone under the mistletoe, so the holidays are a prime time for scams. Be careful when finding an online sweetheart especially one that gets cozy too fast or asks for money.

Puppy scams: Who doesn't want a new puppy for the holidays, but be careful buying pets online, especially at the holidays. You may end up getting a puppy mill pooch with problems, or you may pay for your new pet and get nothing at all because it was a scam. Use caution this holiday season to avoid becoming a victim to one of these scams.