



Fraud and Identity Theft

Fraud (or defauding or scamming) is a crime in which someone tricks an individual for unfair or unlawful gain. Frauds are almost always about getting access to money or property. Fraud is both a criminal and civil wrongdoing.

Identity Theft occurs when someone uses your personal information without your knowledge or consent to commit a crime, such as fraud, theft, or forgery.

Scams to Watch out For

Romance Scam – Online dating is tempting, but some people only want your money. Never send money to someone you've never met, always meet in person, and don't provide your personal information.

Income Tax Extortion – The Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA) does not make threatening phone calls, they will never solicit personal information. If you get a call like that, it is a scam.

Online Purchases – Not all sites are what they claim to be. Make sure to double-check before purchasing from an online website. Don't download shopping apps without verifying it is from a safe source.

Employment Offer – Not every job offer is real. Remember that if you didn't apply, you didn't get hired. Review emails with a critical eye – look for poor grammar, lack of job details, and over-the-top pay scale.

Phishing – Not all phishing emails are obvious. We often see phishers craft detailed scam emails using publically available information. They need a close look that most phishing emails to spot.

Subscription Scam – Endorsements and the promise of a 'risk free trial' lead people to sign-up for into subscription traps with large monthly charges to their credit card. Read all the terms very carefully.

Advance Fee Loans – If any company is asking for up-front money to secure a loan, walk away. These organisations prey on people who don't qualify for reputable loans. This is an illegal practice in Canada.

Fake Tech Support – Scammers will pretend to be tech support and try to “fix” your computer by installing malware. Never give control of your computer unless you are absolutely sure who you are talking to.

Bank Investigator Scams – Scammers will pretend to be bank representative, law enforcement officer or an investigator and they tell you that there is fraudulent activity on your account. Don't give financial information over the phone. A real bank will already have that information.





Some Ways to Protect Yourself

Never send money to someone you have never met face-to-face. Verify who they are first.

Don't click on links or open attachments in unsolicited email. They could carry malware.

Don't believe everything you see. Scammers are great at mimicking official seals, fonts, and other details

Don't buy online unless the transaction is secure. Make sure the website contains "https" in the url

Be extremely cautious when dealing with anyone you've only met online.

Never share personally identifiable information with someone who contacts you unsolicited.

Don't be pressured to act immediately. Scammers don't want you to think about important decisions

Use secure, traceable transactions when making payments for goods, services, taxes, and debts. Don't pay by wire transfer, prepaid money card, gift card, or other non-traditional payment methods

Work with local businesses that possess proper identification, licensing, and insurance especially contractors who'll be coming into your home, or anyone dealing with your money or sensitive information. Check them out at bbb.org to see what other consumers have experienced

Be cautious about what you share on social media consider only connecting with people you already know. Be sure to use privacy settings on all social media and online accounts.

Report suspicious activity contact your bank immediately if your card is lost or stolen, and if you suspect your identity has been stolen report it to the police and the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre (www.antifraudcentre.ca or 1-888-495-8501)

Resources

Better Business Bureau – Top Scams

<https://www.bbb.org/mbc/programs-services/top-10-scams/>

Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre

<http://www.antifraudcentre-centreantifraude.ca/index-eng.htm>

