



# Nine Ways to Protect Yourself From Scams



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Scammers target people of all demographics and often succeed because they catch you off guard. Practicing good security habits can help reduce your chance of becoming a victim. Here are nine best practices to better protect yourself and your loved ones.

## 1 Always initiate the interaction yourself

- Ask yourself: is this a normal or typical interaction and means of communication?
- Verify information through another source.
- Proactively reach out to entities using known contact information.

## 2 Create strong, unique passwords

- Use at least 12 characters.
- Create different passwords for each account.
- Use multifactor authentication.
- Consider using a password manager.

## 3 Back up information and update software

- Back up important information to an encrypted device.
- Update software, including operating systems, web browsers and apps.

## 4 Review and monitor all financial accounts and statements

- Check for inaccuracies.
- Review credit reports annually.
- Consider freezing your credit.

## 5 Be mindful online

- Use a personal device and trusted, secured network for sensitive browsing.
- Avoid public Wi-Fi or use a virtual private network (VPN).
- Be careful when sharing personal information on social media.
- Review the default settings on your apps.

### BY THE NUMBERS

- In 2022, victims reported **\$10.3 billion** in losses to the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3).
- IC3 has received more than **2,175** complaints per day over the past 5 years.

Source: FBI 2022 Internet Crime Report.



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### ON THE RISE

Advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) technologies are allowing scammers to clone the voices of loved ones. Remember, always verify the story.

Source: Federal Trade Commission, "Scammers use AI to enhance their family emergency schemes," March 2023.

### RESOURCES

**IRS** – Tax scams & Consumer alerts  
[irs.gov/newsroom/tax-scamsconsumer-alerts](https://irs.gov/newsroom/tax-scamsconsumer-alerts)

**Better Business Bureau**  
 – Scam Tracker  
[bbb.org/scamtracker](https://bbb.org/scamtracker)

### 6 Protect sensitive information

- Store important documents and information in a safe.
- Use a shredder and sign up for eDelivery if available.
- Use a locked mailbox.
- Sign up for Informed Delivery through the US Postal Service at [USPS.com](https://usps.com).

### 7 Reduce the number of unwanted phone calls and text messages

- Register your phone with the National Do Not Call Registry at [donotcall.gov](https://donotcall.gov).
- Visit [ctia.org](https://ctia.org) to see what services, tools and apps may be available to block, filter and flag unwanted calls and texts.

### 8 Be cautious when opening emails with links or attachments

- Think before you click.
- Verify that you know the sender.
- Consider reading email on your computer as opposed to your phone or tablet.

### 9 Report scams

- Internet and international scams can be reported to the FBI at [ic3.gov](https://ic3.gov).
- Other scams can be reported to the Federal Trade Commission at [ftc.gov](https://ftc.gov).

## TOP 5 CRIME TYPES BY VICTIM LOSSES IN 2022



Investment



Business Email Compromise (BEC)



Tech Support



Romance/Confidence



Data Breach

This material should be used as helpful hints only. Each person's situation is different.

Source: FBI 2022 Internet Crime Report

You should consult your investment professional or other relevant professional before making any decisions.

Contact your financial advisor or investment professional for more information.

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