



Avoid Holiday Shopping Scams Don't Fall Victim to Online Schemes

'Tis the season for holiday gifting, and many shoppers will go online this time of year to find the best deals on popular items. But the sellers you buy from may not be what they seem. Thousands of people become victims of holiday scams every year. Scammers can rob you of hard-earned money, personal information, and, at the very least, a festive mood.

Look out for scammers this holiday season:

- ✓ Always get a tracking number for items purchased online so you can make sure they have been shipped and can follow the delivery process.
- ✓ Be wary of sellers who post an auction or advertisement as if they reside in the U.S., then respond to questions by stating they are out of the country on business, family emergency, or similar reasons.
- ✓ Avoid sellers who post an auction or advertisement under one name but ask that payment be sent to someone else.
- ✓ Consider canceling your purchase if a seller requests funds be wired directly to them via a money transfer company, pre-paid card, or bank-to-bank wire transfer. Money sent in these ways is impossible to recover, with no recourse for the victim.
- ✓ Avoid sellers who act as authorized dealers or factory representatives of popular items in countries where there would be no such dealers.
- ✓ Verify the legitimacy of a buyer or seller before moving forward with a purchase. If you're using an online marketplace or auction website, check feedback ratings.
- ✓ Avoid buyers who request their purchase be shipped using a certain method to avoid customs or taxes inside another country.
- ✓ Be suspect of any credit card purchases where the address of the cardholder does not match the shipping address.
- ✓ Always be wary of deals that seem too good to be true.

If you do become the victim of a holiday scam, contact your bank immediately. You should also inform your local law enforcement agency, and file a complaint at [IC3.gov](https://www.ic3.gov).