

Top 10 Tips – Top tips to avoid online scams

Supplied by: **Citizens Advice Milton Keynes**



Top 10 Tips for..... Avoiding online scams.

Online scams are schemes to con you out of your money using your computer and the internet, either through fake websites or emails. Although there are many ways scammers can get into your computer to steal your money and identity, there are ways you can protect yourself.

We've got a ten, top tips for what you can do to cut down the chance of others getting hold of personal information through your computer, tablet or smart phone.

If you're looking to protect your identity and cash from online scammers:

- Only allow someone to remotely access your computer if they are from a trusted source, such as your internet service provider
- Create passwords which are long, unique and use a mix of random numbers and lower and upper case letters. The longer the password the harder it is to guess. A ten digit password is better than an eight digit one. Make sure you change passwords regularly and don't share them
- Use **antivirus software** and keep it up to date. This will check for malicious computer programmes and monitor files before they are opened. Up-to-date software is important to protect against the most recent viruses. If you buy software online make sure it is from a genuine supplier
- Understand what software you are installing on your computer or phone and make sure you are using a secure site when you buy software, tablet or smart phone. A secure site will have a web address beginning with **https** not http
- Make sure you leave your **firewall** is switched on. A firewall is a security shield that stops scammers getting into your computer. Operating systems such as Windows come with built in firewall settings. They can monitor and warn you of unexpected access to your computer
- Make sure you regularly install **updates** to your operating system. Windows is an example of an operating system

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- install the latest version of your web browser, for example Internet Explorer, which will have the latest security features
- Don't open suspicious or unknown emails, email attachments, texts or pop up messages. For example an email with an unusually worded subject heading
- No genuine online company will contact you to ask for your log-in details, such as your password or user id. You should only need to provide this information when you are logging onto a service such as online banking
- Before entering payment card details on a website, make sure the link is secure.

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