



FSA - Keeping You Safe

Holiday Shopping Cybercrime Tips

According to eMarketer, the 2021 holiday shopping forecast predicts to see over \$1 trillion dollars in retail spending with an 11.3% increase in online sales. Criminals are also mindful to this increase and will work to take advantage of the increased frequency of online purchases and promotions. This includes sending you a text message impersonating companies that are reputable, such as Walmart, Verizon, Amazon, or Costco. The text message will often include a deal to help you save money or obtain a gift card.

Here are four tips to ensure you don't become a victim of cybercrime thanks to our friends at the Better Business Bureau:

1. **Be cautious when receiving a message from an unknown sender.** Even though many companies will use text messages to market their deals, you must opt in to receive those messages. If you haven't allowed an organization to text you, this is likely a scam.
2. **Do not click on links from a stranger.** Links are commonly shortened, so it is difficult to identify where you will be redirected. If you click on the link, you could end up going to a dangerous website looking to collect your information or even have malware downloaded to your device.
3. **Confirm deals are legitimate with the company before you proceed.** If the deal is something that you are interested in, go to the official website of the company or contact them directly. They will be able to inform you of the legitimacy of the deal and how to take advantage of the special.
4. **Install antivirus software on all your devices.** Whether it is your phone or your computer, it is important to protect your information from cybercrime. The antivirus software will help by scanning for anything harmful, such as malware, and alert you before you click into a malicious link.

It is important to report fraud if you are suspicious. This can be done through the Florida CFO office at [FraudFreeFlorida.com](https://www.fraudfreeflorida.com). If you are wanting to do a quick scan of active scams, the Better Business Bureau offers a [scam tracker service](#) that allows you to search for scams by keyword, type, and location.

For more tips please visit the Florida Sheriffs Association's Crime Prevention Tips: flsheriffs.org/crime-prevention.