



## Fraudsters are smart. Here are some tips to keep your information safe.

In the past month, the number of online scams has risen nearly 700%. Many involve COVID-19. Nearly 40,000 web addresses were created in March — many of them owned by bad actors — that contain words like “coronavirus,” “COVID-19,” and “CDC.” Fraudsters send fake phishing emails with links to these websites that are designed to collect passwords and credit card numbers. Some phishing emails include attachments infected with malware.

### How to stay one step ahead of online fraudsters

The tips below can help you spot phishing attempts and keep your personal and business information safe.

- **Be skeptical of virus-related emails**, particularly those with urgent instructions.
- **Examine a sender’s email address** that appears to come from your employer, your children’s school, or your church. Does the sender’s email address match the genuine email address?
- **Be wary of emails that contain instructions** about direct deposits or tax payments.
- **Avoid downloading email attachments.** PDFs, .docs, .xlsx, .pptx, .jpg and other formats can hide computer viruses.
- **Decline to provide personal information** like usernames or passwords on a webpage that’s linked from an email.
- **When visiting a financial website**, enter the web address manually, use a bookmark you’ve already created, or use the company’s app.
- **Avoid taking polls on Facebook** about places you’ve visited, celebrities you’ve met or other personal lists. Some exist only to harvest personal information for use in hacking your accounts.
- **If you accidentally provide scammers with a password**, immediately change that password wherever you’ve used it.

### 10 common phishing email subject lines

These are used by phishing fraudsters to entice unsuspecting readers to click on links within the email.

- *“Instructions for depositing federal CORONA-19 stimulus check faster”*
- *“List of those who will not qualify for \$1,200 stimulus check”*
- *“All employees: read and acknowledge new Communicable Disease Management Policy”*
- *“New instructions for direct deposit of payroll checks”*
- *“Update on COVID-19 cases in your neighborhood”*
- *“New ‘At Home’ Coronavirus testing kit now available for purchase”*
- *“Instructions from (your boss) on help in sending an urgent payment”*
- *“New COVID-19 prevention and treatment information! Attachment contains instructions from the U.S. Department of Health on how to get the vaccine for FREE”*
- *“New local Coronavirus charity launched to help those in greatest need”*
- *“We have personal information about you and will infect you with the virus unless you pay us”*