

Romance Scams

Romance scams occur when a criminal adopts a fake online identity to gain a victim's affection and trust. The scammer may chat back and forth with their victim for weeks, even months to form a connection. The criminal may also send flowers or gifts to further form the illusion of a romantic or close relationship. But ultimately, this new-found "friend" will ask their victim for money.



Tips for Avoiding Romance Scams:



Go slowly and ask a lot of questions.

A scammer's intention is to establish a relationship as quickly as possible, endear themselves to the victim, and gain trust. Be suspicious if an individual seems too perfect or quickly asks you to leave a dating service or social media site to communicate directly.



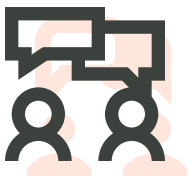
Don't be afraid to "play detective".

Research the person's photo and profile using online searches to see if the image, name, or details have been used elsewhere. Look for inconsistencies between what they post, and what they tell you.



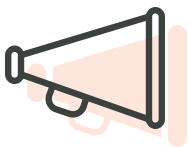
Do not send money.

Never send money to anyone you have only communicated with online or by phone. Scammers will ask for money to help a sick family member, deal with a personal emergency, or to pay for travel expenses to visit you - and then they disappear.



Talk to a trusted loved one.

Beware if the individual attempts to isolate you from friends and family or requests inappropriate photos or financial information that could later be used to extort you.



Pay attention to excuses.

If the individual promises to meet in person but then always comes up with an excuse why he or she can't. If you haven't met the person after a few months, for whatever reason, you have good reason to be suspicious.