

Avoiding Job Scams

Recommended for Adults

As the number of people searching for jobs rises, the number of people looking to take advantage of those people also rises. It is important to use caution when searching for and applying to a new job, as some job postings are seeking to exploit job seekers for their time, money, or labor. Once a job seeker knows what to look for, they can apply to legitimate jobs with confidence!

What Does a Job Scam Look Like?

Job scams can be posted on various popular websites. From listings on Craigslist and Facebook to websites such as Indeed that only host job postings, scams can be present anywhere. Job scams can also be received via emails, as well as on posters and flyers. This is not a finite list of places where scams can be present, but if one knows what to look for, one can avoid job scams no matter where they are.

Some immediate signs that a job posting might be a scam include:

- **An offer of a lot of money for easy work** – If an offer sounds “too good to be true,” it probably is. If a payment of hundreds or thousands of dollars is offered for minimal work, it is likely a scam.
- **Being asked for money, or to cash a check up-front** – Money should only flow from employer to employee. Check cashing scams, money laundering schemes, and wire fraud are among the cons behind a fake employer asking a potential hire to hand over money.
- **A job offer without an interview** – Any offer that claims that potential hires don’t need to interview for the job will likely have something fraudulent activity occurring behind the scenes. Would you hire someone sight-unseen?
- **Requests for personal information** – If a potential employer asks for bank information, credit card information, or any other information one would feel uncomfortable giving to a stranger, it’s likely a job scam. Some personal information, such as a home address, social security number, or even bank information for direct deposit payments may need to be divulged later in the hiring process, but a legitimate company will not ask for that information up-front. Personal information can be divulged once a job offer has been established as legitimate, but be careful.
- **Misspellings or grammar errors in correspondence** – Everyone’s sent that email where they notice a typo after hitting send, but if a company sends emails with the company name inconsistently written (for example, Jobs, Inc. is much different than Jobs, LLC.), or



with poor grammar and spelling errors throughout, it is more likely that the job posting is a scam.

For more information on detecting job scams, *The Balance Careers* website also offers examples of different types of job scams that may be encountered. While this list of “The Top 10 Job Scam Warning Signs” is not exhaustive, it does provide insight. <https://tinyurl.com/ybd8vege>

What Can Be Done to Verify a Legitimate Job Posting or Offer?

Before applying for a job or accepting a job offer, a few steps can be taken to check on some of the red flags that might’ve come up. Doing something as easy as typing the name of the company into a reliable search engine is a good first step – does the company have a professional website? Is the job posting listed there? Is there a clearly-identifiable address and contact information listed? A job seeker may also want to search the contact’s name and communication points (email address, phone number, street address) to verify their legitimacy.

Job seekers might also consider checking the Better Business Bureau’s website (www.bbb.com) and the Federal Trade Commission’s website (www.ftc.gov) for more information about the hiring company. Several more tips can be found on *The Balance Careers* website’s article, “How to Tell if a Work-at-Home Job is a Scam.” <https://tinyurl.com/yagm9hko>

More Information on Scams

Federal Trade Commission – Government Job Scams <https://tinyurl.com/yd9wk8qk>
Focusing on government jobs (using the Postal Service as an example), the page gets specific on how scammers attempt to trick job seekers, and what legitimate postings look like.

Federal Trade Commission – Job Scams <https://tinyurl.com/glw8q7f>
The basics of job scams explained by video and text, along with credible places to look for jobs, and how to report a job scam to the FTC.

LA County Dept. of Consumer and Business Affairs - Top Holiday Job Scams and How to Avoid the Traps <https://tinyurl.com/y9ywjote>

A quick-read covering some job scam red flags already mentioned here, and beyond.

Scam Me if You Can by Frank Abagnale <https://tinyurl.com/y47hon49>
“*In Scam Me If You Can*, [Abagnale] reveals the latest tricks that today's scammers, hackers, and con artists use to steal your money and personal information--often online and over the phone. Using plain language and vivid examples, Abagnale reveals hundreds of tips...”

Scammed by Gini Graham Scott on Hoopla <https://tinyurl.com/y9w9wv96>
“Drawn from the personal experience of dozens of victims, including the author's own encounters, *Scammed* exposes the most prevalent consumer and money scams lurking in modern society.”



Avoid Work at Home Scams – Lynda.com/LinkedIn Learning Video <https://tinyurl.com/y83jrbgc>
“In this video, I want to help you identify some common job scam tactics, so you can be safer and confident when looking for a remote job.”

Steer Clear of Job Scams – Lynda.com/LinkedIn Learning Video <https://tinyurl.com/vaiebprm>
“So whenever you're searching online, keep these warning signs in mind and be wary of any out of the blue job offers. If a flexible job sounds too good to be true, it probably is.”

Legit Places to Look for Jobs

www.careeronestop.org – A database of searchable jobs sponsored by the US Dept. of Labor. This website also contains information for workers of different demographics who may face additional challenges when seeking unemployment, such as veterans, people who have been laid off, or older people in the workforce.

www.indeed.com – Users of Indeed can post their resume for recruiters to find, or they can actively search the database of posted jobs.

www.linkup.com – LinkUp pulls data directly from the job posts presented on company websites. Job seekers, if interested in a listing, are directed to the company’s website for more instructions on applying.

www.upwork.com – Upwork helps freelance professionals and companies seeking independent contractors connect.

www.ziprecruiter.com – This website allows users to upload their resume or actively search the database of posted jobs.

www.governmentjobs.com – Job seekers looking for employment in the public sector can search through the Government Jobs database.

www.careerbuilder.com – Users upload their resume for companies to find, or they can directly search for jobs through the database.

www.glassdoor.com – Users can upload their resume to be sought out by recruiters. Users can also search the database for available jobs.