



## How to Avoid Falling Victim to Credit Scams

Scammers look to make a quick buck by targeting easy prey. Trusting your instincts is important, but you cannot solely depend upon your gut to safeguard yourself against credit scams. This is why it is essential to know how to tell when someone is making an illegitimate claim or attempting to take advantage of you.

### **Red-Flags and Tell-Tale Signs of a Scam:**

#### **You Are Contacted Out of The Blue and Pressured to Act Immediately**

Ever received a call from an unknown caller congratulating you for winning a prize or a lottery ticket, or even something as simple as a lucky draw? Perhaps it was an alarming call where the unknown caller shared that your computer was hacked or that your passwords were compromised. It could even be something scary like a lawsuit threat or threat of arrest. They're all scams—whether in the form of calls, emails, texts, or pop-up messages when you're browsing the internet. Whatever their means, the one constant is the sense of urgency or fear that they seek to instill so that you don't take the time to pause and question them and will slip up in a moment of ecstasy, anxiety, or confusion.

#### **They Claim to Be From A Legitimate Organization and Demand Private Information**

All legal institutions, be it your bank, a local government body, the telecom, or internet company, repeatedly inform their consumers that their representatives will never ask for personal details like social security or pin numbers. And yet, when scammers pretend to represent charity organizations, companies, or businesses, people tend to trust and give out such personal information. If you're ever asked to share such data, always question the caller's legitimacy and report such activity to the appropriate authorities.

## How to Deal With Different Types of Scams:

The [Lampco Federal Credit Union](#) team can provide advice on how to keep yourself safe and avoid losing money to scammers. Here's everything in a nutshell.

### Never Divulge Personal Information

Phishing is a common tactic of **phone scams** whereby fraudsters trick you into giving them access to your accounts. It is important never to give out personal or financial information over the phone, no matter who the person claims to be.

### Be Wary of Unknown Links and Unprotected WiFi/Hotspot Connections

**Internet scams** are extremely popular, and scammers usually hack into your computer to access your personal information through malicious software when you click on unknown links. Never click on links. Never download from pop-ups. Invest in anti-virus and spyware software. Use only strong passwords. Logging into public WiFi may also leave you vulnerable. It is vital to use VPNs or avoid logging into free WiFi unless you are sure that the connection is secure.

### Verify Information and Use Multi-Step Authentication

In the event that a scammer calls you, mention that you would like to think it over and verify their claims before acting upon their 'advice.' No matter what they offer, decline immediately and do research before transferring funds or providing information. Double-check unknown businesses with the Better Business Bureau and keep checking the FTC's website for the latest scams and frauds.

Enable two-factor authentication for all your accounts to ensure that no unauthorized third parties can gain access to them without your permission.

### Keep A Close Eye on Your Accounts

ATMs and card machines can be rigged to read and store your information. This is why it is important to keep track of all your transactions. Know how to spot a rogue or hacked ATM machine and if you see an activity that you don't recognize (notifications of withdrawals you didn't sanction), alert your bank immediately. Also, use cash in tourist areas where such credit crime rates are usually higher.

[16 million USD](#). That's how much scammers took off unsuspecting victims in 2016. Don't be a statistic. Stay informed. Question anything that's free or highly tempting and never, ever give out your personal information like bank details, social security, date of birth, credit card number, etc. Stay vigilant at all times and know how to spot a scam so you can avoid getting tangled up in messy situations.