



How to keep safe online this festive season.



www.getsafeonline.org

Whether we're shopping or socialising, playing games or watching a movie, dating or enjoying a few days away, the internet normally plays some part in our festive season these days.

But fraudsters also love this time of year, taking advantage of the fact that we're busy and sometimes distracted. Some are even using AI to make their work easier and

more convincing. Which is why it's essential that we take a few easy precautions to protect ourselves, our families, finances and devices against online harms.



The 12 tips of Christmas



Buying online

Spot the signs of fake websites, insecure payment pages and counterfeit goods. Never pay someone you don't know by bank transfer if you haven't seen the goods in person. Before you visit a website, check if it's likely to be legitimate or fraudulent at www.getsafeonline.org/checkawebsite



Delivery notifications

Beware of texts claiming to be from a parcel firm telling you there's a 'delivery fee'. If in any doubt, **always call the courier or retailer** on the number you know to be correct to check if the message is authentic or not.



Mobile devices

Protect all new or second-hand internet-connected phones, tablets and computers with a reputable security app/software. Add a new and unique PIN or passcode as soon as you power up. Ensure all documents and photos are backed up automatically so you don't lose them. Check privacy and location settings for new and existing devices.



Smart devices

Always set up new and unique **passwords on internet-connected devices** like voice assistants, appliances, cameras, kids' toys and fitness watches, as soon as they're switched on. Using the factory-set default passwords could result in them being hacked. And remember that voice assistants and smart speakers are designed to pick up what you're saying. Find more information about setting up connected devices.



Updates

Download software, app and operating system updates on all your devices as soon as you get notified. Better still, set them to update automatically. Otherwise, they could get infected by malware, leading to fraud, identity theft or snooping.



Second-hand devices

Do a factory reset to erase your data if you're selling or gifting a computer, mobile device or console. Find out how from the manufacturer's website. If you've bought or been given a used device, remove the previous owner's settings and data if this hasn't already been done.



Mobile apps

Download new apps **only from official sources** such as App Store, Google Play or Microsoft Store. Downloading them from elsewhere could result in fraud or identity theft.



Out & about

Don't use **Wi-Fi hotspots** in cafés, pubs, hotels, on public transport and other public places for anything confidential as they could be either insecure or fraudulent.



Gaming

Avoid things like pirated games, grieving and in-game overspending. Keep track of how much time you're spending online. Don't overshare private information on chats. **Keep an eye on your kids' gaming** by checking games' PEGI age limits and talking with them about who they're or playing and chatting with.



Oversharing

Make sure **what you share online** is respectful and doesn't reveal confidential, sensitive or embarrassing information about yourself or others, including family members and friends. If you're away from home, keep it to yourself, as burglars keep an eye on social media too.



Safeguarding your children

Talk to your children about being safe and responsible online, including what they share, who they're talking to and the type of content they access, including in apps and games. Consider downloading a reputable parental control app and using ISP content filters. Make sure they aren't running up bills in games and other apps.



Video calls

Make sure those Christmas calls are **safe and secure** by using a service that needs a strong password, and don't share the call invitation or details outside the person or group on the call.



Get Safe Online

Get Safe Online is the UK's leading source of information and advice on online safety and security, for the public and small businesses. It is a not-for-profit, public/private sector partnership backed by law enforcement agencies and leading organisations in internet security, banking and retail.

For more information and expert, easy-to-follow, impartial advice on safeguarding yourself, your family, finances, devices and workplace, visit www.getsafeonline.org

If you think you have been a victim of fraud, report it to **Action Fraud** at actionfraud.police.uk or by calling **0300 123 2040**. If you are in Scotland, contact **Police Scotland** on **101**.



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