Stay safe online

Consolidated communications

Online safety tips for seniors.

October is Cyber Security Awareness Month, and we want to help you stay safe online. Scammers often target seniors, and the best line of defense is identifying risks and keeping updated on your own online safety practices.

1 Be wary of suspicious messages

Scammers use emails, text messages, phone calls or social media direct messages to trick you into clicking a link. If you don't know the sender, delete it, block it or just ignore it.

2 Don't open attachments

Don't open email attachments you aren't expecting or from people you don't know. Call or text your friends or family (instead of hitting reply) to make sure they really sent you something.

3 Ignore unsolicited phone calls

Phone scammers can easily spoof phone numbers to look like they come from anyone, like your bank. Beware of calls you aren't expecting that ask you to confirm information. That's a trick to get your personal data.

4 Don't click on pop-ups

Pop-ups can be scary, making threatening claims to try and get you to download what they claim to be 'protective' software. Don't click on these pop-ups. Instead, install anti-virus software from a trusted source.

5 Use secure WiFi or wait until later

If you're traveling or just at a repair shop, limit what you do on public WiFi. While convenient, these connections can be less secure than you'd think. Avoid logging into your email, shopping and banking when on public WiFi.

6 Watch for government impersonators

If you think it's a scam it probably is. Scammers can pretend to be from the IRS, Medicare or other local and national government bodies. Get the actual phone number of the organization on their website to confirm before doing anything.

7 Avoid sweepstakes or lottery traps

Again, if it's too good to be true, it probably is. These calls, texts or emails are likely scammers trying to get your personal information. Don't ever send them your info, or money to get a "reward".

8 Make strong passwords

A strong password is at least 12 characters long. Try a sentence or phrase that you like and will be easy to remember. Also, keep a list of your passwords in a safe, secure place away from your computer.

9 Be aware of what you post

Know that when you post a picture or message online, you may be sharing someone else's private information. Post only about others what you would like posted about you.

10 Don't make quick financial decisions

Trustworthy businesses and government entities won't force you to give them your personal information, especially your birthdate, social security number or bank account. Be wary before providing this information.

With a little prep and mindfulness, you can stay safe online!