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Internet Crime

Reporting E-mail Scams

If you're the victim of a traditional swindle, most people know what to do: File a police report with the proper jurisdiction if it's a criminal matter, or hire a lawyer.

There are definite steps you can take for reporting e-mail scams and Internet fraud. Several federal agencies, responding to the growing volume of scams, have set up divisions to take reports and investigate such incidents. Reporting e-mail scams helps everyone on the Internet.

The FBI, together with the National White Collar Crime Center, run a Web site dedicated to Internet crime, called the [Internet Crime Complaint Center](#). Visitors can learn more about Internet crime, review a "Frequently Asked Questions" gallery and view e-mail fraud and Internet scam examples. The site contains a large number of tips for avoiding specific scams. It also has a link for filing a complaint against a third party whom you believe has defrauded or attempted to defraud you.

The U.S. [Department of Justice](#) also hosts Web sites that allow you to report Internet fraud and e-mail scams. The site contains links to documents on how to report such crimes broken down by the specific type of fraud. It points out, for instance, that the U.S. Secret Service, U.S. Postal Service, Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement all play a role in investigating and prosecuting e-mail scams and Internet fraud, depending on its nature.

There are also many private Web sites that contain information and tips about what to do if you suspect an Internet or email scam. Site such as [Scamdex](#) and [Hoax-Slayer](#) are two examples. If the past is any indication, e-mail scam artists and Internet fraud perpetrators will continue to evolve with technology, constantly probing security systems for weaknesses and searching for victims to dupe. Like expert marketers, a recent trend has e-mail scams shying away from the "mass mailing" approach they once used in favor of targeted, more personalized appeals. Internet users should always use caution when receiving e-mails from unknown sources and should avoid following links they provide. Use the delete key, experts advise. If you think you've been a victim, report it to the online authorities.

Source: www.howstuffworks.com
www.ic3.gov/complaint

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