



Tips for Safe Online Shopping

Being a safe and secure shopper starts with STOP. THINK. CONNECT.: Take security precautions, think about the consequences of your actions online and enjoy the conveniences of technology with peace of mind while you shop online. Remember these tips during all online purchases.

Online Shopping Tips:

- **Conduct research:** When using a new website for purchases, read reviews and see if other consumers have had a positive or negative experience with the site.
- **When in doubt, throw it out:** Links in emails, posts and texts are often the ways cybercriminals try to steal your information or infect your devices.
- **Personal information is like money: value it and protect it:** When making a purchase online, be alert to the kinds of information being collected to complete the transaction. Make sure you think it is necessary for the vendor to request that information. Remember, you only need to fill out required fields at checkout.
- **Use safe payment methods:** Credit cards are generally the safest option because they allow buyers to seek a credit from the issuer if the product isn't delivered or isn't what was ordered.
- **Don't be disappointed:** Read return and other policies so you know what to expect if the purchase doesn't go as planned.
- **Protect your \$\$:** When shopping, check to be sure the site is security enabled. Look for web addresses with https:// indicating extra measures to help secure your information.

Shopping on the Go:

- **Now you see me, now you don't:** Some stores and other locations look for devices with Wi-Fi or Bluetooth turned on to track your movements while you are within range. Disable Wi-Fi and Bluetooth when not in use.
- **Get savvy about Wi-Fi hotspots:** Limit the type of business you conduct over open public Wi-Fi connections, including logging on to key accounts, such as email and banking. Adjust the security settings on your device to limit who can access your phone.

Basic Safety and Security Tips:

- **Keep a clean machine:** All web-connected devices – including PCs, smartphones and tablets – free from malware and infections by running only the most current versions of software and apps.
- **Get two steps ahead:** Turn on two-step authentication – also known as two-step verification or multi-factor authentication – on accounts where available. It adds a layer of protection beyond logon and password.
- **Make better passwords:** If your passwords are weak, improve them by adding capital letters, numbers and symbols and using different passwords for every account.

Visit stophinkconnect.org for more tips about how to stay safe online.