



Stop Gifting to Scammers this Holiday Season

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MADISON – This holiday season, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) is reminding shoppers to make sure their gift purchases are not going to scammers.

“Every year we receive complaints from people who thought they were buying holiday presents but never got them,” said Lara Sutherlin, Administrator of DATCP’s Division of Trade and Consumer Protection. “It’s important for consumers to recognize how they can protect their holiday purchases from a scam.”

Shopping Online

- Avoid suspiciously deep discounts or free offers, including social media posts or emails that offer these deals. If something seems too good to be true, it probably is.
- Verify websites before ordering. A quick internet search can help you verify the company’s information and find any warnings about their website.
- Check that you are using a secure website (“https” rather than “http”) before entering your password or any personal or banking information.
- Pay by credit card. Federal law gives you the right to dispute charges if you report them to the credit card company within 60 days of receiving your statement.
- Keep a paper trail, and carefully review your credit card statements after the holidays for any unauthorized charges.

Buying Gift Cards - Watch for the following common gift card scams:

- Phony surveys that promise a free gift card in exchange for your personal information. Scammers sell your personal information and no gift card is ever sent.
- Unsolicited messages, such as email, text, social media or internet ads that promise a free gift card. Do not click on any links and delete the message.
- Online auction sites selling discounted or bulk gift cards. The cards may have been tampered with, have already been used, or expired.

Verifying Shipping Notices - Here’s how you can tell if a shipping notice is fake:

- Poor grammar or spelling in emails claiming to be from a legitimate company.
- Sender’s email address does not match the company’s web address.
- Email lacks specifics about the sender or the package's supposed contents.
- Asks you to provide personal information or open an attachment to review an order.
- Threatens that a package will be returned to the sender, or that you will be charged a fee for not responding to the message.

For more information or to file a consumer complaint, visit https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/ConsumerProtection.aspx, or send an email to datcphotline@wi.gov, or call the Consumer Protection Hotline at (800) 422-7128. Connect with us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/wiconsumer or Twitter [@wiconsumer](https://twitter.com/wiconsumer).

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