



OFFICE OF THE ILLINOIS
ATTORNEY GENERAL

5 Steps to Safe Online Shopping

START YOUR SHOPPING...SAFELY

The internet is like having a shopping center at your fingertips. It's close and convenient, but you still need to consider how to get there safely.



- Start your shopping on a secure WiFi network.
- Save your shopping for a time when you can be on your own network or a private network that is password-protected.
- Consider using your mobile phone as a personal hotspot rather than a public network.
- Be careful while shopping online in public (on a secure WiFi). You never know who could be looking over your shoulder.

SELECT YOUR SITES ...WISELY

With online shopping, there are millions of vendors and independent makers promoting products on social media, internet ads, and email. Not every vendor or offer can be trusted.



- Avoid making purchases through ads on social media platforms.
- Use a trusted browser to research vendors and look for product reviews.
- Don't click on links embedded in text or email messages. They could take you to fraudulent sites.
- Confirm that the web address is secure. Look for the letters "https" and a picture of a closed padlock or unbroken key.

CREATE YOUR ACCOUNT PROFILE...SECURELY

Online vendors want your business, but they also want information about you. This drives their advertising, but can expose you to unwanted transactions in the future.



- When creating an account, consider using a "shopping" only email address or an alias such as Apple's "Hide My Email" feature. You can easily delete these after your purchase.
- Use strong, unique passwords for shopping accounts. Don't reuse passwords and change them often.



- When available, use multi-factor authentication (MFA). This is a security process requiring two distinct forms of identification to access an account—typically a password (something you know) and a temporary code.
- Know what data is being collected and select or deselect according to your preferences.
- Make sure that you provide only necessary info. Often, optional fields are for marketing purposes or could expose you to fraud.

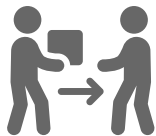
PAY FOR ITEMS IN YOUR CART...CAREFULLY



Decisions you make about how to pay for your items, can help avoid later problems.

- Buy only from web vendors that protect your financial information when you order online.
- Pay with a credit card rather than a debit card to keep your bank account safe and for easier dispute resolution if you are scammed.
- Think twice about paying with peer-to-peer platforms such as Zelle, CashApp, and others.
- Don't save your payment information in the app for future transactions.
- Watch out for opt-ins that could sign you up for recurring charges, like a subscription or a membership.

GET YOUR ITEMS HOME...DEPENDABLY



After you make your purchase, you will want to ensure it arrives as expected and when promised.

- Know the return/refund policy and check if the vendor provides tracking and/or has a dedicated customer service line or email.
- Consider using a secured delivery locker or request a signature so packages aren't simply left unattended at your door.
- Don't be fooled by scams that send "delivery update" texts for orders you did not actually place. Those can contain harmful links.

For more information regarding internet privacy and online safety or to file a consumer complaint, please visit www.IllinoisAttorneyGeneral.gov

Chicago
1-800-386-5438

Springfield
1-800-243-0618

Carbondale
1-800-243-0607

Individuals with hearing or speech disabilities can reach us by using the 7-1-1 relay service.