



ROMANCE SCAMS

occur when a criminal adopts a fake online identity to gain a victim’s affection and trust. The scammer then uses the illusion of a romantic or close relationship to manipulate and/or steal from the victim.

The criminals who carry out romance scams are experts at what they do and will seem genuine, caring, and believable. Con artists are present on most dating and social media sites.

The scammer’s intention is to establish a relationship as quickly as possible, endear himself to the victim, and gain trust. Scammers may propose marriage and make plans to meet in person, but that will never happen. Eventually, they will ask for money.

Scam artists often say they are in the building and construction industry and are engaged in projects outside the U.S. That makes it easier to avoid meeting in person—and more plausible when they ask for money for a medical emergency or unexpected legal fee.

If someone you meet online needs your bank account information to deposit money, they are most likely using your account to carry out other theft and fraud schemes.

TIPS FOR AVOIDING ROMANCE SCAMS



Beware if the individual seems too perfect or quickly asks you to leave a dating service or social media site to communicate directly.



Research the person’s photo and profile using online searches to see if the image, name, or details have been used elsewhere.



Never send money to anyone you have only communicated with online or by phone.



Beware if the individual attempts to isolate you from friends and family or requests inappropriate photos or financial information that could later be used to extort you.



Beware of false promises if the individual promises to meet in person but then always comes up with an excuse why he or she can’t. If you haven’t met the person after a few months, for whatever reason, you have good reason to be suspicious.



Be careful what you post and make public online. Scammers can use details shared on social media and dating sites to better understand and target you.



Go slowly and ask lots of questions.

If you suspect an online relationship is a scam, **STOP** all contact immediately. If you are the victim of a romance scam, file a complaint with the FBI’s Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3).

<https://www.ic3.gov>