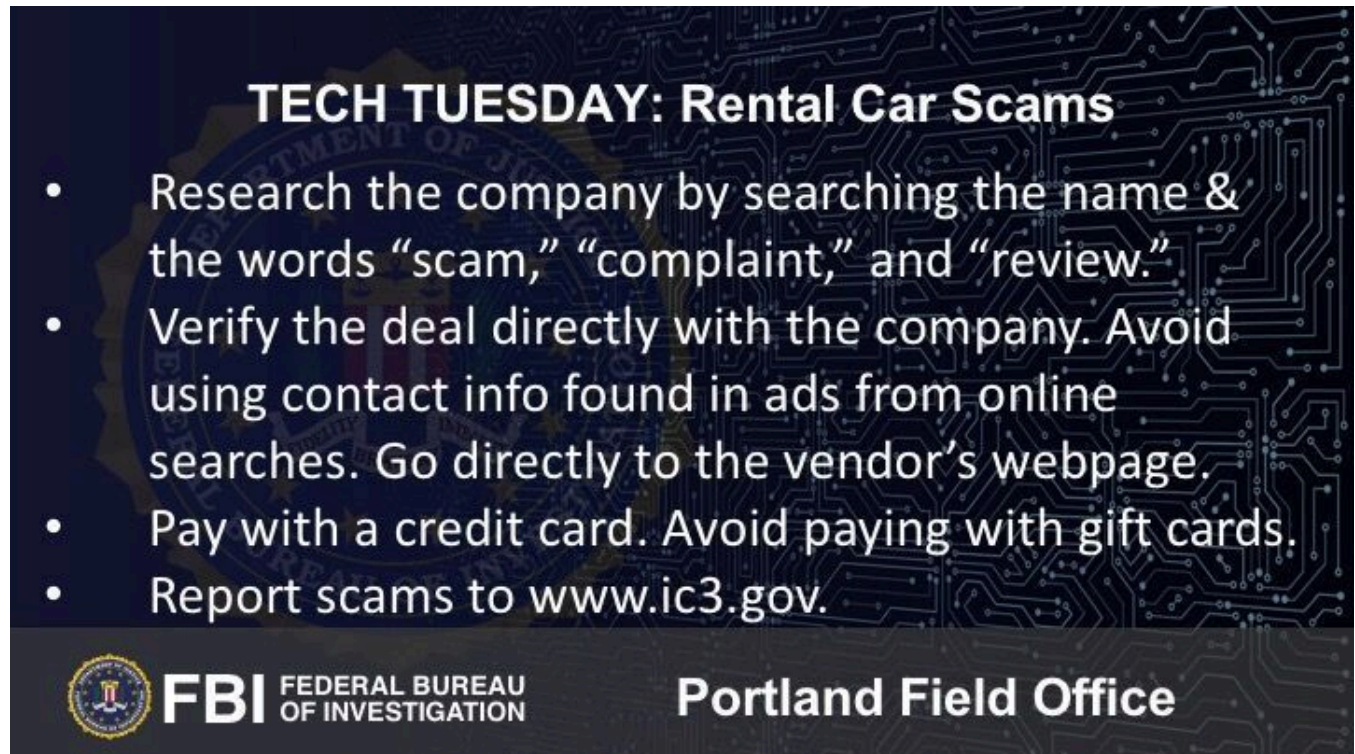


Tech Tuesday: Building a Digital Defense Against Rental Car Scams

July 27, 2021

A graphic with a dark blue background featuring a circuit board pattern and a faint FBI seal. The title "TECH TUESDAY: Rental Car Scams" is at the top. Below it is a bulleted list of five tips. At the bottom left is the FBI logo and text, and at the bottom right is "Portland Field Office".

TECH TUESDAY: Rental Car Scams

- Research the company by searching the name & the words “scam,” “complaint,” and “review.”
- Verify the deal directly with the company. Avoid using contact info found in ads from online searches. Go directly to the vendor’s webpage.
- Pay with a credit card. Avoid paying with gift cards.
- Report scams to www.ic3.gov.

 **FBI** FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Portland Field Office

Welcome to the Oregon FBI’s Tech Tuesday segment. Today: Building a digital defense against rental car scams.

The summer of 2021 is a much different – and hopefully better – place for you and your family than the summer of 2020. States are lifting restrictions, and you are finally able to travel again!

That tropical beach – or the mountains – or even that big city across the country is calling, and there is nothing more that you want to do than hop on a plane and go. What you may find when you get there, though, is that renting a car is very difficult and expensive.

According to our friends at the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), rental car availability is at an all-time low and prices are sky high. That, of course, gives scammers a prime opportunity.

The FTC says scammers are posing as rental car companies, setting up their own websites, and advertising fake customer service phone numbers. The goal is to convince you that they’re legit.

You should consider it a big red flag if you are asked to pay with a gift card or prepaid debit card. Other ways to protect yourself include:

Research the rental car company by searching for the name of the company and words like “scam,” “complaint,” or “review” to check if other people have had a bad experience.

Verify deals with the company directly. If you need customer support, look for contact info on the company’s official website. Don’t use a search engine result. Scammers can pay to place sponsored ads in search results, so they show up at the top or in the sponsored ad section.

Pay with a credit card if possible. You can dispute credit card charges, but gift cards and prepaid debit cards can disappear like cash. Once you give the number and PIN to a scammer, the money is gone.

If you are the victim of any online fraud, you should also report the incident to the FBI’s Internet Crime Complaint Center at **www.ic3.gov** or call your FBI local office.