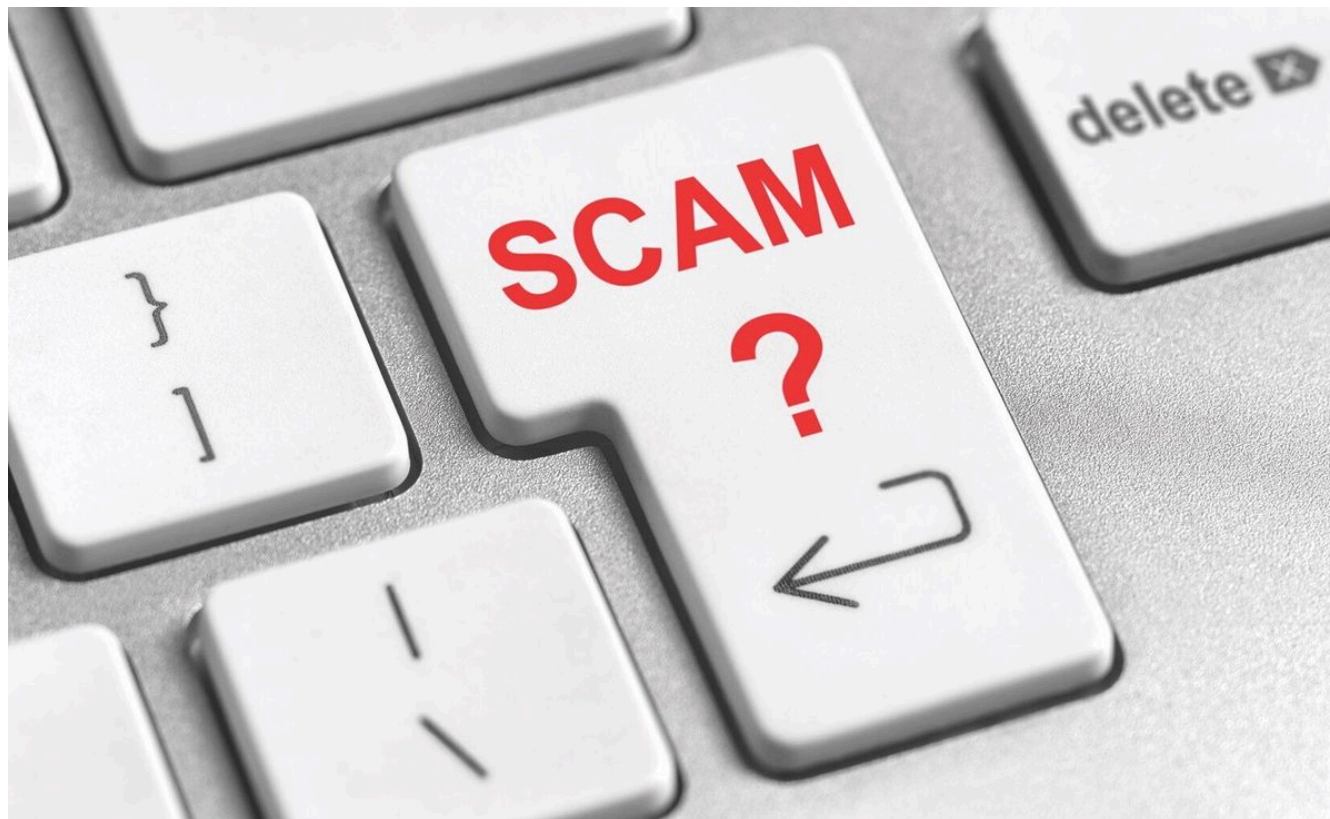


How to avoid employment scams in 2025

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This time of year, people look ahead to 2025 with hopes and aspirations for many things.

Topping the “new year, new me” list are hopes for a new job. According to a recent Gallup report, about half of all employees are looking for new job opportunities. However, for anyone planning a job hunt, Better Business Bureau (BBB) recommends being on the lookout for fake job scams, an increasingly risky thread to online job hunters.

Whether you’re looking for seasonal work, a way to make quick money online, or a new career path, it’s important to research potential employers to make sure they’re legitimate and reputable. Here’s what you need to know about employment scams in order to make sure the businesses you apply to in 2025 are trustworthy and legitimate.

WHAT IS AN EMPLOYMENT SCAM?

Employment scams are sophisticated schemes that target eager and sometimes vulnerable job hunters.

According to investigations by BBB, employment scams impact an estimated 14 million people annually, resulting in over \$2 billion in losses. The median loss per victim is \$1,995, with recent BBB Scam Tracker reports exceeding \$10,000 in losses — a devastating blow to individuals simply trying to secure meaningful work.

These scams primarily target young adults, with individuals between 18 and 44 being the most frequent victims. Particularly alarming is that those aged 18 to 24 are at the highest risk of falling prey to online schemes in general.

WHAT EMPLOYMENT SCAMS LOOK LIKE

Employment scams create fake job opportunities, often for remote positions, that impersonate legitimate businesses or trusted brands.

These fraudulent listings appear on job sites and social media, and can even arrive via email or text if your information has been compromised. The scammers' ultimate goals are to steal personal information, time, labor and money.

Before "hiring," they may demand excessive personal details, including ID photos, videos of you holding identification, and even social security numbers. These materials can be used for identity theft and related malicious activities.

After the "hiring" process, scammers use various methods to exploit victims. A common practice of employment scams is to charge an upfront fee for job training or job equipment. They might also "accidentally" overpay you with a fraudulent paycheck and request you wire the "excess" amount back to them from your bank account.

Some of the most common versions of this scheme BBB's seen lately include:

Reshipping jobs that involve handling stolen goods or items purchased with stolen credit cards.

Online "Task optimization" jobs where you "bid" money for a task that promises a big payout, collecting your money and labor then never paying out.

STAYING SAFE

To protect yourself, the most important thing you can do is research the company, the website, and the person who contacted you before you submit your application.

Go directly to the source: look up the job listings on the company's website and research the hiring manager. While doing this, keep in mind the signs of an impostor website to avoid scams that pretend to be brands you know and trust.

Then, before applying for the job, look up the company's reputation with trusted online tools like BBB.org to research the business's ethics, transparency, and integrity.

For example, if you see that a business you are interested in is BBB Accredited, that means it has been thoroughly vetted and has committed to acting in accordance with high ethical standards. In short, a few minutes of research can save you from potentially wasting weeks and/or falling into financial disaster due to an employment scammer.

ADDITIONAL TIPS

Be skeptical of upfront costs: Legitimate employers will not ask you to pay money to start working.

Remember the golden rule of fraud prevention: If something seems too good to be true, it probably is. Trust your instincts and do your due diligence.

Look up the name of the company with the word “scam” to see if other job hunters have learned something fraudulent about the business.

For help recovering from a scam, and to warn others, report scams to BBB's Scam Tracker and other trusted reporting entities.

WHAT TO REMEMBER

As employment scams continue to evolve, so must your approach to the job market. Finding your next job opportunity can be challenging, and a “too-good-to-be-true” job offer can sound tempting, but protecting your personal and financial information should always be the priority.

So, start your 2025 job hunt off the right way by approaching new opportunities with research, knowledge of current scams, and a healthy amount of skepticism. If you do, you'll significantly increase your likelihood of avoiding scams and only working with the reputable and trusted companies that your “new year, new me” can be proud of!

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