

Community Safety are working with town and parish councils to ask that you include Key messages/articles on Cyber Crime/Scams & Fraud on your websites and or in newsletters. Would it be possible to include the following information in your next newsletter?



How to protect yourself from ticket fraud:

- Only buy tickets from the venue's box office, the promoter, an official agent or a well-known and reputable ticket exchange site.
- Avoid paying for tickets by bank transfer, especially if buying from someone unknown. Credit card or payment services such as PayPal give you a better chance of recovering the money if you become a victim of fraud.
The password you use for your email account, as well as any other accounts you use to purchase tickets, should be different from all your other passwords. Use three random words to create a strong and memorable password, and [enable 2-step verification \(2SV\)](#).
- Be wary of unsolicited emails, texts or adverts offering unbelievably good deals on tickets.

Is the vendor a member of Society of Ticket Agents and Retailers (STAR)? If they are, the company has signed up to their strict governing standards. STAR also offers an approved Alternative Dispute Resolution service to help customers with outstanding complaints. For more information visit star.org.uk/buy_safe.

Fraudsters often create fake ticket retail companies. Victims are lured in using social media or phishing emails with offers of the chance to buy tickets to a popular event, but instead give away their personal information or money, with no tickets received in return. Phishing messages often look real, but instead will either steal your information or divert to malicious websites which can infect your computer with malware.

If you feel at all suspicious, report the email to the Suspicious Email Reporting Service (SERS) at report@phishing.gov.uk. For more advice on how to stay secure online, please visit cyberaware.gov.uk.

Find out more about fraud at <https://stopthinkfraud.campaign.gov.uk>

If you have been a victim of fraud or cybercrime, report it at www.actionfraud.police.uk or by calling 0300 123 2040.

Almost one in three people who book holidays online do not confirm that the travel provider is legitimate, according to Get Safe Online.

Web users who book holidays online are being warned to follow precautions when booking their getaway. Research also shows that many holiday-makers are unaware of some of the most common holiday scams. The results show that 67% of people say they've never heard of holiday rental scams, 68% responded in the same way to the idea of bogus holiday sites, with 81% unfamiliar with 'gap-year' fraud.

Fake holidays

In addition, over 1 in 5 (22%) say they've been approached with holiday deals or villa rentals via unsolicited emails, phones calls or SMS text messages from individuals or organisations they don't know – another area where caution is required. Over one in five holidaymakers do not ensure a web page is secure when entering payment details online, which puts them at risk of having this information intercepted by fraudsters.

People looking to book holidays should not avoid the web, but must be aware of how to keep themselves safe when doing so.

Get Safe Online has developed a new Travel Essentials Checklist with ABTA:

1. **Take your time and shop around** – It's important you take your time with entering your holiday requirements onto a travel website, just as you would when booking face-to-face in a travel agency. Double check all details before entering your payment information. This will help ensure you're buying the holiday you want and that is 'right' for you, whilst protecting yourself and your money.
2. **Be vigilant** - Check the track record of any holiday retailer unfamiliar to you. Don't reply to unsolicited bogus emails from retailers you don't recognise. Legitimate companies will never send an information request via a pop-up advert. If you don't recognise the sender, don't reply.

3. **Check for approval** - Make sure you know that your holiday company is a member of a recognised travel authority, such as ABTA. Find out also whether it provides financial protection for your holiday. ABTA members have to sign up to a strict code of conduct which governs the relationship between you and the company. ABTA also has a consumer helpline if you have any queries about an ABTA Member, and an independent arbitration service if you have any complaints.
4. **Don't fall for fake competition scams** – A common trick by fraudsters is an email or phone call claiming you have won part of a luxury holiday but need to pay a small fee to secure it. Remember, if it sounds too good to be true it probably is.
5. If **renting a private villa** speak to the owner/agent directly via telephone; if the number isn't provided email and request it. Ask for references from other people who have visited the property and make contact with them directly.
6. **Do your research** – Get the full address and find it on Google maps, and ask for a full contract which should set out all the terms and conditions of the rental, deposits, payment terms etc.
7. **Ensure the site is secure** – On any web pages where you are entering personal or financial details, look for the signs that tell you if the site is secure. Look out for a padlock symbol in the bottom right of the browser window or for the payment pages to begin with 'https://'. It's also important to use your common sense and be wary if you suspect something is wrong. When making a payment to an individual use a secure payment site such as PayPal – never transfer the money directly into their bank account.
8. Always **log out of sites** which have asked you to log-in or to register details.
9. **Keep your purchase records** - Keep receipts of all online holiday or travel orders. Print off any confirmation pages and emails and keep them in case you are charged incorrectly.
10. **Monitor your payment** – Be sure to check your credit card and bank statements carefully once the holiday is booked and notify the bank as soon as possible if you notice anything is wrong.
11. **Don't advertise your home to thieves** by posting details of your holiday dates on social networking sites; stating when you are going away highlights to everyone the fact your home will be empty for a significant amount of time.
12. **Trust your instincts** – Five-star holiday at a two-star price? If something doesn't seem right, take additional steps to verify the offer and if still in doubt, stay away.

For more information about holiday scams, visit [Get Safe Online's website](#).

Please note: Action Fraud is not responsible for the content on external websites.

To report a fraud, call Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or use our [online fraud reporting tool](#).

