KNOW THE TELLS

Red Flags: The 7 Biggest Scams

Investment / “Pig Butchering”

$6.57B in 2024

A stranger turns warm fast and steers talk to crypto or an “amazing” investment; an app you can’t verify; trouble withdrawing, or new “fees/taxes” to get your money out.

Business Email Compromise

$2.77B

An unexpected request to change payment or banking details; pressure to wire urgently or quietly; a sender address that’s subtly wrong; last-minute changes to wiring instructions.

Tech Support

$1.46B

A pop-up with a phone number saying you’re “infected”; an unsolicited “Microsoft” or “Apple” call; anyone wanting to remotely access your computer; payment in gift cards.

Government Impersonation

$789M

A “government agency” demanding immediate payment; threats of arrest, deportation, or frozen benefits; demands for gift cards, wire, or crypto; a spoofed caller ID.

Romance

$672M

An online love who can never meet or video chat; fast, intense affection; a sudden crisis or “opportunity” that needs money; requests for gift cards, wire, or crypto.

Phishing / Spoofing

#1 most reported

Unexpected emails or texts about account problems, deliveries, or prizes; links urging you to “verify” now; a subtly-wrong sender; any request for passwords, codes, or card numbers.

Lottery / Sweepstakes

Targets seniors

You “won” a contest you never entered; you must pay a fee or taxes up front; payment by gift card, wire, or prepaid card; pressure and secrecy (“don’t tell anyone”).

The common thread: gift cards, wire transfers, crypto, urgency, and secrecy.

See any of these? Stop, don’t pay, and ask someone you trust. Report at reportfraud.ftc.gov and ic3.gov.