



Dear Subscriber,

Have you bought anything online recently?...

Almost 34% of all retail sales during May 2020 were carried out online, and new research suggests that only 16% of UK consumers intend to return to their old shopping habits post-lockdown.

Online shopping fraud during lockdown

Action Fraud, the UK's national reporting centre for fraud and cyber crime, received **over 16,000 reports** relating to online shopping and auction fraud during the lockdown, with losses totalling over **£16m**. Members of the public have reported buying mobile phones (19%), vehicles (22%), electronics (10%) such as games consoles, AirPods and MacBooks, and footwear (4%) on sites such as eBay (18%), Facebook (18%), Gumtree (10%) and Depop (6%), only to have the items never arrive.

Top tips for shopping online securely:

Choosing where to shop:

If you're making a purchase from a company or seller you don't know and trust, carry out some research first. For example, by checking to see if others have used the site and what their experience was.

Email accounts:

Use a strong, separate password for your email account. Criminals can use your email to access other online accounts, such as those you use for online shopping.

Scam messages:

Some of the emails or texts you receive about amazing offers may contain links to fake websites. Not all links are bad, but if you're unsure don't use the link, go separately to the website. And remember, if a deal looks too good to be true, it probably is.

Payment method:

If you decide to go ahead with the purchase, use a credit card if you have one as other payment providers may not provide the same protection.

What to do if you've fallen victim to online shopping fraud

We all make mistakes and these days the scams can be incredibly convincing.

If you think you've visited, or made a purchase on, a bogus website, you should first, take a note of the website's address, then close down your internet browser. You should then report the details to Action Fraud and contact your bank to seek advice.

Whether you've been a victim of fraud will depend on how much information you've provided to the website, so keep an eye on your bank transactions, if you can. Contact your bank immediately about anything that you don't recognise, even small amounts.

For more information about how to stay safe online, please visit www.actionfraud.police.uk/cybercrime