



CANADIAN ANTI-FRAUD CENTRE BULLETIN

Romance Scams

2021-02-10

FRAUD: RECOGNIZE, REJECT, REPORT

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre has seen an increase in online scams that target individuals in isolation due to the lock downs and travel restrictions. This includes fraudsters targeting people looking for companionship or love through dating sites and social media.

With valentine's day just around the corner, Canadians should be on the lookout for Romance Scams. In 2020 alone, Canadians lost more than \$18.5 million to this scam.

In Romance Scams, fraudsters will gain the trust of the victim by carrying on a relationship over a period of time. This can include displays of affection, such as, sending gifts, flowers and tokens to prove that their feelings are genuine. In many cases, the fraudster will claim to be professional business people or military personnel that are travelling or stationed abroad. Once trust is gained, fraudsters will begin to ask for financial assistance for reasons like urgent situations (e.g. a sick family member or to complete a business transaction) or to return to the country (e.g. plane ticket, lawyer fees, or duty & taxes).

Warning Signs

- Attempts to meet in person never happen, there's always an excuse why they can't meet.
- Fraudsters want to develop a quick relationship with you. Be suspicious when someone you haven't met professes their love to you.
- Be cautious of an individual that claims to live close to you but is working overseas. This is a set up for the fraudster to provide you with many reasons to ask for money.
- If you are asked to accept a payment from someone you've met online and send a part of the funds back to them or someone else - don't do it!
- A growing trend being noticed is the fraudster asking you to invest in a new business venture or cryptocurrency.

How to protect yourself

- Never, under any circumstances, send money to someone you've never met.
- Protect your personal and financial information. Do not share personal or financial information with anyone you've only met online.



Royal Canadian Mounted Police
Gendarmerie royale du Canada



Competition Bureau
Canada

Bureau de la concurrence
Canada



Ontario Provincial Police

Canada

- Never send intimate photos or videos of yourself. They could be used to blackmail you.
- Do a reverse image search of any photos you are sent to see if they have been taken from a stock photo site or someone else's online profile.
- Do not travel to another country to meet someone for the first time. This is often a setup to get you to partake in criminal activities with risks of injury, arrest or even death.
- Learn [more tips and tricks for protecting yourself](#).

If you think you or someone you know has been a victim of fraud, please contact the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre at 1-888-495-8501 or report online at www.antifraudcentre-centreantifraude.ca.