10 Ways to Recognize a Job Scam

1. **Job offers from strangers.** If someone offers you a job without getting an application from you first, meeting you, or doing an interview, it’s a scam.

2. **High pay for simple work.** Be wary if ads, emails, or callers promise to pay a lot of money for jobs that don’t seem to require much effort, skill, or experience.

3. **Requests for money.** If someone wants you to pay a fee or buy something to get work, stop. This is a sure sign of a scam.

4. **Requests for personal identity or financial information.** Be very suspicious if an unfamiliar “employer” or recruiter asks for your Social Security number, birth date, bank account number, or other private information that could be used to steal your identity.

5. **Fake checks.** Some scammers send checks to cover the supposed cost of doing a job, with a portion to be used as payment to the worker. This is a technique often called an “overpayment” scam.

6. **High pressure to act now.** Reject anybody who pushes you hard to accept an unsolicited offer of work, or who pressures you to take other actions that seem unusual, for the sake of a job.

7. **Long-distance employer.** Many job scams involve opportunities that seem to come from an employer located in another country or a distant state. If the employer lists only a P.O. Box and does not provide a local street address, be wary.

8. **Suspicious emails.** All unsolicited emails bearing job offers should be viewed with suspicion. If you receive a job offer in an email that comes from a free email service, such as Gmail, Hotmail, or Yahoo, it is very likely to be a scam. Most real employers will use an email address related to their company’s website address. Bear in mind that it is also easy for scammers to imitate an email address from a legitimate company.

9. **Fake websites.** If the company making the job offer has a website, check to see when the website was established. You can do this by entering the website address in a “WHOIS” lookup site.

10. **Ask the BBB!** It only takes minutes to check a company’s record with the Better Business Bureau (BBB) at  [www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org) and search scam reports using BBB’s Scam Tracker at  [www.bbb.org/scamtracker/us](http://www.bbb.org/scamtracker/us).

How to Find Real Job Possibilities

1. **Search through reputable channels.** Look at job listings on well-known, legitimate employment websites, as well as job openings posted on websites of companies where you might like to work. Check job postings at UICCareers.com or LinkedIn. Ask friends and relatives to let you know of job opportunities and use them to expand your network.

2. **Stick to job opportunities that you have researched and applied for yourself.** Avoid job opportunities that are offered by strangers who may contact you by email, phone, or social media. Do not respond to job offers that you did not apply for. Even when you are submitting an application, check to be sure that the job is legitimate before making contact.

3. **Always check job listings to verify whether they are genuine.** Be aware that even reputable websites may have job scam listings posted. If you publish your resume on a job website, this can sometimes lead to unwanted contacts from potential scammers. Visit the website of the potential employer’s company by searching for it online. Check all the jobs posted on that website to see if the job is listed there.

4. **Know which job types are often used in scams.** Common job types targeted by scammers include caregiving, virtual administrative assistant, customer service representative, driver of an advertising-wrapped car, security guard, medical billing, processing rebates, envelope stuffing, re-packing and re-shipping merchandise, posting reviews online or conducting online searches, secret or mystery shopping, forwarding or transferring payments, or other types of work-at-home employment.

5. **Manage your social media accounts to protect yourself.** Some scammers may try to gain greater access to your social media account to learn more about you, either to target you and your contacts with scam offers, or to use your identity for scam purposes.