

Job Scams

“If it’s too good to be true, it usually is.” This common saying is helpful advice to guide your job searching. Job scams are rampant throughout the internet, especially in today’s economy. It’s important to have a keen eye for what sounds like a good opportunity, and what simply sounds too good to believe.

No one is immune to a job scam. It’s possible for anyone to fall prey to illegitimate postings. Remember, these scams are made to look real. Some may be easier to spot than others. However, many scams can be linked to seemingly authentic websites. So what should you look for? What do you do if you spot one? Here are some tips on how to protect yourself from a job scam.

1. *Paying to get paid:* Legitimate companies do not ask you to pay them. This is a quick way to spot a scam. If the job claims to return your money in spades, with a larger-than-life interest rate, it’s not legitimate and you should keep looking.
2. *Horror stories:* One fool-proof way to find out information on a company is to type their name in a search engine with the word “scam” behind it. Read what others have to say about it. Use this opportunity to learn from others’ mistakes and make sure that you do not repeat them.
3. *Fast cash by sitting at home:* Don’t believe that you can make a large sum of money by doing a small amount of work. If it is a legitimate organization/company, they are going to expect you to work in order to get paid.
4. *Flashy promises:* Many scammers will use enticing graphics or pictures to make grand promises that can’t be kept. Be wary of people promising you things you know they cannot deliver.
5. *Anonymity:* If you’re speaking with a legitimate hiring manager, the e-mail will come from a specific source (i.e. a company’s own domain name). It will not come from an anonymous Gmail account.
6. *KeWl aNd HiP:* A professional e-mail will not have multiple misspellings, abbreviations or incorrect grammar. If you see a job description or any type of correspondence where a lot of exclamation marks are used, steer clear.
7. *They call you:* If you did not seek out the job, but the “company” contacts you first, they may not be legitimate. Rely on your research to discern if this is a legitimate opportunity.
8. *You’re HIRED:* If the person you are corresponding with immediately offers you the job, with little or no communication, start considering it may be a scam. Companies will want to interview you before you get a job. Count on that.
9. *Vague and unclear:* If the description has vague language that does not give you a clear idea of the job, it is not worthy of pursuing. Qualifications that anyone could meet (“must be 18 years or older,” “Must have access to Internet”) do not mention years of experience or education. That is a red flag for a scam.
10. *Just Google:* Simply do some amateur investigative work. It will be a few minutes of your time that will save you trouble down the road.