

Cyber Monday Safety Bulletin



Here are some tips compiled from the Massachusetts Office of Consumer Affairs and the Department of Homeland Security.

1. **HTTPS:** Make sure to shop on sites that use secure HTTP as denoted by “https://” before the site’s URL. An “s” in the http field tells you the connection is secure and your data is safeguarded. Similarly, a lock icon by the URL also means you are protected.
2. **Use a Credit Card:** There are laws that limit your liability for fraudulent credit card charges. You may not have the same level of protection when using a debit card
3. **Know the seller:** Purchasing from a seller you know and trust is the best way to ensure an excellent shopping experience. For unknown websites, use an online store review service such as Epinions, BizRate, the Better Business Bureau, or even a simple Google search to see what other consumers are saying. When using auction sites such as eBay, check the seller’s rating. Additionally, be on the lookout for scam sites that lure consumers with attractive deals in an effort to rip them off.
4. **Shipping:** Make sure to use a shipping service that offers **signature confirmation** to avoid having your goods stolen off your doorstep. This is offered by USPS, FedEx, UPS, and other major carriers.
5. **Connect with care.** Avoid doing any online shopping on unsecure wireless networks, such as places with public and free Wi-Fi. Do your online shopping at home, and make sure your home wireless network is password protected.
6. **Be cautious online.** Do not click on suspicious links or download items from unknown sources.
7. **Set strong passwords.** Make sure your passwords are complex and unique to each account. Change your passwords often, and don’t set passwords that will be easy for cyber criminals to guess, such as “password.” A good rule of thumb is to create passwords with eight characters or more that use a combination of numbers, letters, and symbols.
8. **Don’t believe everything you see.** While many retailers are offering great deals on Cyber Monday, there will also be deals that are just too good to be true. Before you buy that new tablet for only \$50, be sure to shop only on the websites of trusted retailers, and avoid shopping through pop-up ads or unfamiliar websites.
9. **Keep a record of your order.** Retain all documentation from the order in case your purchase doesn’t ship or you come across unauthorized charges on your bill.
10. **Check your statements.** Check your purchase records against your credit card and bank statements. If there are differences, report them immediately.

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