

Job scams and how to spot them

Easy · 12 min to read; 10 min to check an offer · Free

Real employers never charge you to get hired, never send a check and ask you to send part back or buy gift cards with it, and reshipping packages is never a real job. Placement firms usually charge the employer, not you. Before you accept, search the company name plus "scam," "review" or "complaint," and never give your Social Security number or bank details until you've verified the job is real.

YOU'LL NEED

- ☐ The job post or message
- ☐ Someone you trust to run it by
- ☐ The company's and recruiter's names

WHAT TO KNOW

- 1 **Never pay for the promise of a job.** Honest employers, including the federal government, never ask you to pay to get hired; anyone who does is a scammer.
- 2 **Never use a new employer's check to send money back, buy gift cards, wire money or buy crypto.** That's a fake check scam: the check bounces, and the bank wants you to repay the full amount.
- 3 **Know that money showing in your account doesn't mean the check is good.** Banks must make deposited funds available quickly, but a fake check can take weeks to be discovered.
- 4 **Turn down any "job" receiving packages, removing the receipts and reshipping them.** Reshipping is never a real job; the goods are often bought with stolen cards.
- 5 **Be wary of placement firms that charge you.** Honest placement firms usually get paid by the hiring company. If one wants a fee, especially up front, walk away.
- 6 **Search the company or person's name plus "scam," "review" or "complaint." No complaints doesn't guarantee a company is honest, but complaints can tip you off.**
- 7 **Talk to someone you trust before you say yes.** It gives you time to think.
- 8 **Use reliable job sources: USAJOBS.gov for federal jobs, CareerOneStop (U.S. Department of Labor) and local government sites.** For Postal Service jobs, apply only at about.usps.com/careers; USPS never charges to apply or take an exam.

Watch out Scammers post on real job sites and social media, and send messages that look like they come from your college or a group you know. A familiar name isn't proof.

DAD NOTE *Real jobs pay you. If the money is flowing the other way, it's not a job.*

Full lesson: aptkeys.com/work/finding-work/job-scams-and-how-to-spot-them/

Checked October 2, 2026. Sources: Federal Trade Commission; U.S. Postal Inspection Service.