



CANADIAN ANTI-FRAUD CENTRE BULLETIN

Romance Scams

2022-02-14

FRAUD: RECOGNIZE, REJECT, REPORT

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a large impact on how we are able to socialize with the people in our lives; more and more individuals have found themselves on the internet looking for company during the difficult times of self-isolation and lockdown. The Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre (CAFC) is receiving a large number of reports from individuals that have fallen victim to various types of romance scams including (but not limited to) scams that begin on dating websites and trick victims into investing in fake cryptocurrency platforms, with the promise of large monetary returns.

Every year around Valentine's Day, suspects are on the look-out for unsuspecting victims. In some cases, victims may be contacted on dating websites or social media and then asked to switch to a different method of communication. It is common for suspects to use pictures found on social media of real people such as business people, members of the military, family photos, pet photos and hobbies. Scammers will often edit these pictures based on the lies they have told.

Scammers have requested money for many reasons, including:

- personal/family emergency,
- claims they have no access to their existing funds,
- unexpected business expenses, legal expenses or professional fees,
- investing in a new business and they need the victims' help,
- and travel fees to return home.

Warning signs

Beware of:

- profiles that seem too perfect,
- someone you haven't met in person professes their love to you,
- a suspect that tries to move communication to a private/different method of communication (email/text/Social Media Platform, etc.),
- attempts to meet in person get cancelled/always an excuse to not meet-up,
- a person who discourages you from talking about them to friends/family,
- a suspect acting distressed/angry to force you into sending more money,
- poorly written messages or messages addressed by the wrong name,



Royal Canadian Mounted Police
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- and an individual who “introduces” you to their family on social media to legitimize the relationship.

How to protect yourself

- Don’t give out your personal information (name, address, DOB, SIN, banking credentials).
- Don’t accept friend requests from people you do not know.
- Don’t invest your money in platforms provided by people you don’t know.
- Be careful who you share images with. Suspects will often use explicit pictures to extort victims into sending more money.
- Protect your online accounts.
- Never send money to someone you haven’t met.
- Learn [more tips and tricks for protecting yourself](#).

Anyone who suspects they have been the victim of cybercrime or fraud should report it to their local police and to the CAFC’s [online reporting system](#) or by phone at 1-888-495-8501. If not a victim, report it to the CAFC anyway.