



NEWS FROM SCDCA

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

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Holiday Shopping Series: Staying Safe Online

COLUMBIA, S.C. – As Cyber Monday rapidly approaches, the South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs (SCDCA) is reminding consumers that the holiday season is a busy one for fraudsters, too. Consider the tips below to protect personal information when shopping online:

- **Put computer security first.** Keep up with software updates, run virus scans regularly, and use anti-spyware software. Consumers are the first line of defense when it comes to protecting their personal identifying information.
- **Consider the network.** Using an unsecured network like free, public Wi-Fi can allow thieves to steal information with little effort. Use secured, password protected networks when shopping online.
- **Use secure sites.** Shop on well-known sites that are trusted. When entering sensitive data on a site, look for “https://” or “shttp://,” in the address bar. The “s” stands for secure and indicates that information is being protected while it’s transmitted.
- **Consider alternate payment methods.** Debit cards are convenient, but do not offer as many consumer protections as credit cards. Using a credit card protects a consumer’s bank account and offers less liability if erroneous/fraudulent charges are not reported in a timely manner.

For more information about cyber security, visit www.stophinkconnect.org. For more information about avoiding identity theft and fraud, visit www.consumer.sc.gov and click REPORT IDENTITY THEFT.

About SCDCA

The South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs aims to protect consumers from inequities in the marketplace through advocacy, complaint mediation, enforcement and education. To file a complaint or get information on consumer issues, visit www.consumer.sc.gov or call toll-free, 1-800-922-1594.

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