

# July Blog

## Fighting Summer Scams: Protect Yourself and Your Money

Summer is a season filled with vacations, outdoor activities, home improvement projects, and family fun. Unfortunately, it's also a time when scammers become increasingly active, looking to take advantage of consumers who may be distracted by busy schedules and travel plans.

At Emerald Credit Union, your financial well-being is our priority. That's why we're sharing some important tips to help you recognize common summer scams and keep your personal information and finances safe.

### Common Summer Scams to Watch For

#### **Vacation Rental Scams**

Planning a summer getaway? Be cautious when booking vacation rentals online. Scammers often create fake listings that appear legitimate and offer prices that seem too good to be true.

#### Protect Yourself By:

- Booking through reputable websites and platforms.
- Researching reviews and property history.
- Avoiding requests for wire transfers or payment through gift cards.
- Verifying the property owner before sending money.

#### **Travel Deal Scams**

You've won a free cruise! You've been selected for an exclusive vacation package! Sound familiar?

Scammers frequently use fake travel offers to collect personal information or upfront fees.

#### Protect Yourself By:

- Being skeptical of unsolicited travel offers.
- Reading the fine print carefully.
- Researching companies before making payments.
- Never sharing personal information over unsolicited calls or emails.

#### **Home Improvement Scams**

Summer is peak season for home repairs and renovations. Unfortunately, dishonest contractors often target homeowners with door-to-door sales pitches and requests for large upfront payments.

#### Protect Yourself By:

- Obtaining multiple estimates.
- Checking references and reviews.
- Working with licensed and insured contractors.
- Avoiding contractors who pressure you to make immediate decisions.
- Never paying the full amount upfront.

#### **Phishing Emails and Text Messages**

Scammers continue to send emails and text messages pretending to be financial institutions, delivery companies, government agencies, and retailers.

These messages often create a sense of urgency, asking you to click a link or provide sensitive information.

#### Protect Yourself By:

- Never clicking suspicious links.
- Verifying requests directly with the organization.
- Looking carefully at email addresses and phone numbers.
- Remembering that legitimate financial institutions will never ask for passwords, PINs, or online banking credentials via email or text.

#### **Red Flags Every Consumer Should Know**

No matter the scam, there are common warning signs:

- Pressure to act immediately.
- Requests for gift card payments.
- Demands for wire transfers or cryptocurrency.
- Promises that seem too good to be true.
- Requests for personal or banking information.
- Unsolicited calls, texts, or emails.

When in doubt, pause and verify before taking action.

#### **How Emerald Credit Union Helps Protect You**

At Emerald Credit Union, we're committed to helping members stay informed and secure. We use fraud monitoring tools and security measures designed to help safeguard your accounts, but your awareness is one of the strongest defenses against fraud.

If you ever receive a suspicious call, email, text message, or social media message claiming to be from Emerald Credit Union, do not respond or provide personal information. Contact us directly so we can help verify whether the communication is legitimate.

#### **Stay Alert This Summer**

Scammers are constantly finding new ways to target consumers, but knowledge is one of the most effective tools for preventing fraud.

This summer, take a few extra moments to verify requests, research unfamiliar offers, and protect your personal information. A little caution today can help prevent significant financial losses tomorrow.

At Emerald Credit Union, we're proud to help guide and grow with you through life's financial journey. If you have questions about account security or suspect fraudulent activity, contact our team right away. We're here to help.

