



VIRGINIANS ARE ENCOURAGED TO STAY CYBER SAFE WHILE SHOPPING ONLINE ON CYBER MONDAY

RICHMOND - The Virginia Information Technologies Agency (VITA) and the Virginia State Police (VSP) are encouraging people in Virginia to be cyber safe when shopping for deals on this Cyber Monday. With the National Retail Federation prediction that online and other non-store holiday shopping will increase from 10% to 12% over last year, the holidays are a prime opportunity for hackers and bad actors to strike.

“Cyber criminals often try to target online shoppers by creating fraudulent sites and email messages, intercepting insecure transactions and going after vulnerable computers,” said Chief Information Officer of the Commonwealth Robert Osmond. “That’s why you need to know what to look out for before you start shopping for deals.”

“If it looks too good to be true, it probably is,” said Virginia State Police High Tech Crimes Captain Alan C. Worsham. “With prices on the rise and everyone looking for the best deals for the holidays, criminals are taking full advantage of the moment. Remember to shop from reputable businesses and think twice if the deal is too good.” Here are some simple steps you can take to protect yourself while shopping:

- Do business with reputable vendors – Before providing any personal or financial information, make sure that you are interacting with a reputable, established vendor.
- Make sure your information is being encrypted – Good indicators that your information will be encrypted include a website URL that begins with “https:” and a padlock icon. If the padlock is closed, the information is encrypted.
- Watch out for emails requesting information – Cyber criminals may attempt to gather information by sending emails requesting that you confirm purchase or account information.

- Use a credit card – There are laws to limit your liability for fraudulent credit card charges, but you may not have the same level of protection for your debit cards.

“The best thing you can do to keep your information safe while shopping online is to be watchful and stay vigilant,” said Chief Information Security Officer of the Commonwealth Michael Watson. “And after you shop, keep an eye on your bank and credit card statements. If there is a discrepancy, report it to the proper authorities immediately.”

“If you choose to shop on a digital marketplace or with someone that you will need to meet in person, do so in a public space,” said Captain Worsham. “And, if you believe you have been scammed, report it to law enforcement immediately.” For more information visit VITA’s website and the VSP website.

Additional Resources:

- 5 Cyber Monday Scams You Need to Know About
- The Worst Black Friday & Cyber Monday Scams (2022 Update)
- 10 tips to avoid Black Friday and Cyber Monday scam