

FBI Houston
FBI Houston Media Office
Email: HO_media@fbi.gov

February 10, 2022

\$1 Billion in Losses Reported by Victims of Romance Scams

HOUSTON, TX—In 2021, some 24,000 victims across the United States reported losing approximately \$1 billion to romance scams.¹ It's likely that many more losses went unreported.

Romance scams occur when a criminal adopts a fake online identity to gain a victim's affection and trust. The scammer then uses the illusion of a romantic or close relationship to manipulate and/or steal from the victim.

The criminals who carry out romance scams are experts at what they do and will seem genuine, caring, and believable. Con artists are present on most dating and social media sites.

The scammer's intention is to establish a relationship as quickly as possible, endear himself to the victim, and gain trust. Scammers may propose marriage and make plans to meet in person, but that will never happen. Eventually, they will ask for money.

Scam artists often say they are in the building and construction industry and are engaged in projects outside the U.S. That makes it easier to avoid meeting in person—and more plausible when they ask for money for a medical emergency or unexpected legal fee.

If someone you meet online needs your bank account information to deposit money, they are most likely using your account to carry out other theft and fraud schemes.

Be careful what you post and make public online. Scammers can use details shared on social media and dating sites to better understand and target you.

If you develop a romantic relationship with someone you meet online, please consider the following:

- Research the person's photo and profile using online searches to see if the image, name, or details have been used elsewhere.
- Go slowly and ask lots of questions.
- Beware if the individual seems too perfect or quickly asks you to leave a dating service or social media site to communicate directly.
- Beware if the individual attempts to isolate you from friends and family or requests inappropriate photos or financial information that could later be used to extort you.
- Beware if the individual promises to meet in person but then always comes up with an excuse for why he or she can't. If you haven't met the person after a few months, for whatever reason, you have good reason to be suspicious.
- NEVER send money, cryptocurrency, or gift cards to anyone you have only communicated with online or by phone, regardless of how in love you are or how in love they say they are with you.

If you suspect an online relationship is a scam, stop all contact immediately and file a complaint with the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center at www.ic3.gov. You can report scams whether or not you've lost money.

Resources:

- <https://www.fbi.gov/scams-and-safety/common-scams-and-crimes/romance-scams>
- https://www.ic3.gov/Media/PDF/AnnualReport/2020_IC3Report.pdf

¹ The exact numbers for 2021 will be available on www.ic3.gov once the Internet Crime Complaint Center's (IC3) annual report is finalized.

Most Wanted	News	What We Investigate	Contact Us
Ten Most Wanted	Stories		Field Offices
Fugitives	Videos	Terrorism	FBI Headquarters
Terrorism	Press Releases	Counterintelligence	Visit the FBI Experience
Kidnappings / Missing Persons	Speeches and Testimony	Cyber Crime	Overseas Offices
Seeking Information	Podcasts and Radio	Public Corruption	
Bank Robbers	Photos	Civil Rights	Additional Resources
ECAP	Español	Organized Crime	Accessibility
ViCAP	Apps	White-Collar Crime	eRulemaking
		Violent Crime	Freedom of Information / Privacy Act
	How We Can Help You	WMD	Legal Notices
FBI Jobs	Law Enforcement		Legal Policies & Disclaimers
Submit a Tip	Victims	About	Privacy Policy
Crime Statistics	Parents and Caregivers	Mission & Priorities	USA.gov
History	Students	Leadership & Structure	White House
FOIPA	Businesses	Partnerships	No FEAR Act
Scams & Safety	Safety Resources	Community Outreach	Equal Opportunity
FBI Kids	Need an FBI Service or More Information?	FAQs	



FBI.gov Contact Center