

DATE: November 15, 2021
BULLETIN: 2021-KDCU-CUB-23
TO: Kansas Chartered Credit Unions
SUBJECT: Holiday Fraud

HOLIDAY FRAUD

In less than two weeks, the holiday season will “officially” launch on Black Friday; however, as we all know, it has been [off and running](#) for weeks. We have all read the news articles about “supply chain” issues and the possibility for many items to be unavailable. Nothing like the word “unavailable” to spur on holiday shoppers, right?!

Online shopping continues to grow so while on your trip over the river and through the woods, be sure to keep in mind the grinchers lurking in the cybershadows. The continued prevalence of data breaches and the release of personal identifiable information provides evildoers with plenty of options. It is not just your members at risk as you (credit union management) lead personal lives and will be doing some holiday shopping. No credit union wants to be the target of a data breach ever, let alone during the holiday season, so tighten up that cybersecurity! (There’s that word again!)

There are many [red flags](#) to be found this holiday season:

- Websites. Remind members to double-check the website on which they are shopping, e.g., look for slight spelling changes which could lead to a copycat website, does the secure padlock appear, etc. The member may have landed on a “spoofed” website.
- Phishing emails. Phishing is a 24/7/365 sport for cybercriminals. Beware of lookalike domains and emails and beware of being redirected to a different website. Is it legitimate? Is the email really from Santa Claus? Or the Elf on the Shelf?
- Delivery scams (may be dressed up as a phishing email). When anxious about a delivery, make sure you triple check before clicking. Is your purchase coming via UPS? Did you order something from Amazon?
- Does the company you have never heard of really have the “toy of the year” in stock? At 50% off?? The member may pay for a counterfeit or the item may never arrive. Regardless, the money is gone.

During the holiday season, it is even more important for credit union staff to be alert to a member being victimized online. Free toys? Gift exchanges through social media? Merchandise sellers wanting to be paid with gift cards? Your members will appreciate good information and reminders from their credit union.

NOTE: In accordance with Governor Laura Kelly’s [guidance](#), KDCU Administrator [Vickie Hurt](#) continues to review the feasibility of resuming the on-site examination program. This is being done in coordination with the NCUA.