

Scam or No Scam

Read each of the scenarios below and decide which are examples of a scam and which are not. Then list the clues that made you think that a scenario was a scam.

1. Alethia received an unexpected phone call. She was informed she had won an all-expenses paid trip for two to Hawaii. What a great surprise! She didn't remember entering any contests. However, Hawaii was a place she has wanted to visit, but it is an expensive vacation and one she can't afford right now. All she has to do is give the caller her credit card number to pay a small fee of \$100 and the vacation is hers.

2. Jack is on Medicaid. He received an email stating that due to a record-keeping mistake he was entitled to a one-time payment of \$200. The email directed him to a website where Jack was to enter details such as his social security number and mailing address. Jack could use \$200 and it was money he was entitled to, right? He quickly filled out the online form.

3. Carlos has a credit card with ABC Bank. He receives a call from a bank representative stating a \$1,050 charge for a purchase made outside the United States using his credit card. Because this was larger than the normal amounts Carlos put on his credit card, the bank representative wanted to know if Carlos had made this purchase. Carlos said no he had not. The bank representative said they would remove the charge and investigate further.

4. It is late and Sam receives a phone call from his grandson, Sean. The connection is bad so Sam has a hard time understanding Sean. Finally, he realizes Sean has been arrested, is in jail and needs money for bail. Of course, Sam wants to help his grandson. Sean tells him to go to the drugstore and buy two gift cards, \$500 each and tells him where to mail the cards.

5. Matt receives a call from the local volunteer fire department. The caller informs him that he won the fishing rod that he bid on at the silent auction fundraiser last week. Matt remembers bidding on it but didn't think he would be the highest bidder. The caller tells him to stop by the local fire hall to collect the item.

6. Robert received a letter from Next Step Recovery Co. stating that the letter served as formal notice that his delinquent tax debt had been placed with Next Step, who is a contractor to the Internal Revenue Service for the collection of the balance as stated in the letter. The letter also included information from the IRS on Taxpayer Rights. To verify the name and address of Next Step, Robert can visit www.irs.gov. The letter stated that Robert can send the balance due by check or money order made out to the United States Treasury and mailed directly to the IRS at Department of the Treasury, Internal Revenue Service, Kansas City, MO 64999 or contact Next Step to discuss a payment plan. It warned not to send cash.

7. Jackson receives a call from a company offering him a job as a professional shopper. He has been looking for work and expresses interest. The caller says they will send him a cashier's check. He should deposit it in his bank account and then wire a portion back to the company to cover expenses. The remainder he gets to keep as payment for his services. Jackson likes to shop, needs the money and agrees to the offer.

8. Shaquilla's favorite hockey team has made it to the Stanley Cup finals. She would love to go but tickets are more than she can afford and difficult to get. She receives a call from a ticket broker saying he has two tickets for sale because the original ticket holder is ill and is unable to attend. Plus, at this price she can buy two tickets and take her dad. But she must act fast. These tickets are in demand. Shaquilla is thrilled and immediately agrees to give the broker her credit card number and address so he can mail her the tickets.

Which scenarios are scams?

What clues made you think these were scams?