



Office of the  
Comptroller of the Currency

# SAFE MONEY

GUARDING AGAINST FINANCIAL FRAUDS & SCAMS

## CONSUMER PRODUCT & RETAIL FRAUD

**Consumer product and retail fraud** involves the purchase or sale of goods, often through deceptive marketing or counterfeit products.

Fraudsters might sell counterfeit goods or use fake retail sites to steal money from consumers.

*SAFE MONEY is a series of informational sheets developed by the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) to help consumers recognize and avoid common financial frauds and scams.*

## RED FLAGS

-  **Deep discounts** on products or offers that seem too good to be true.
-  **Unusual payment requirements** such as wire transfers, gift cards, or cryptocurrency.
-  **Lack of information** on seller's company, such as no return policy or contact details.
-  **Counterfeit goods** or items that don't match the advertised product description.
-  **Misleading advertising** listing false claims about product capabilities or features.
-  **Warranty and return scams** where there is an issue with a product's warranty or the return policy.
-  **Non-delivery** of the purchased product after payment is made.



## FRAUD METHODS

- Counterfeit Goods:** Selling fake or substandard products at high prices or selling high-end products at “too good to be true” prices.
- Online Auction Scams:** Scammers lure buyers with fake auction listings and collect payment without delivering the item.
- Retail Return Fraud:** Using stolen goods or false identity to return products for a refund, store credit, or exchange.

## AVOID FRAUD

### Research Sellers

- Only buy from reputable retailers and read customer reviews before making purchases.

### Be Skeptical of Deals

- If a deal seems too good to be true, it likely is. Avoid offers that promise unusually low prices.

### Review Return Policies

- Ensure seller has clear return and refund policies.
- Avoid purchasing from sites that lack transparency.

## REPORT FRAUD

Fraudsters use counterfeit goods, online auction scams, and retail return fraud to deceive consumers into paying for products they don't receive or that are inferior.

Be sure to take the appropriate and effective steps to report and address consumer product and retail fraud.

### Report to the Federal Trade Commission

- Visit FTC's [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](https://www.ftc.gov/report-fraud) to report the fraud, providing as many details as possible. Or call 877-FTC-HELP (877-438-4357).

### Contact the Internet Crime Complaint Center

- Submit a complaint to the [IC3](https://www.ic3.gov), a division of the FBI.

### Contact Seller or Manufacturer

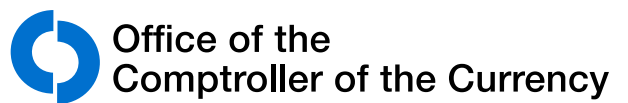
- Reach out to the seller or manufacturer's customer service to report the issue and seek resolution.
- If applicable, use the return or exchange policy.

### Alert Online Retail Platforms

- If the product was purchased online, report the issue directly through the platform's customer support or complaint system.

### Notify Payment Service

- If the product was purchased with a credit card or payment service, report the issue to them for potential buyer protection and fraud investigation.



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## Promoting a Safe, Sound, and Fair Federal Banking System



The Office of the Comptroller of the Currency's (OCC) mission is to ensure that national banks and federal savings associations operate in a safe and sound manner, provide fair access to financial services, treat customers fairly, and comply with applicable laws and regulations.