SCAM ALERT !

Be Wary of Gift Card Scams: If They Ask for Gift Cards, It's a Scam

Scammers ask for payment via gift cards because they're a convenient way to steal money and they're difficult to trace or recover. Legitimate organizations will never ask you to pay them with a gift card.

How Gift Card Scams Work:

1. **A person reaches out about an important matter.** A scammer may reach out through social media, text messages, email, phone calls, or websites and assume any identity they believe will keep the conversation going—a friend, family member, romantic partner, government official, law enforcement officer, technical support representative, or another seemingly trustworthy person. They often create a sense of urgency by claiming there is a problem that must be resolved immediately or by offering an unexpected reward or opportunity.
2. **Scammers will say it's urgent.** They will say to pay them right away or something terrible will happen or you will miss out on an opportunity. They don't want you to have time to think about what they're saying or talk to someone you trust. Slow down. Don't pay. It's a scam.
3. **Scammers instruct you to purchase gift cards.** They might say to put money on an Amazon, eBay, Target, or Apple gift card. They might send you to a specific store or multiple stores — often Walmart, Target, CVS, or Walgreens. The scammer also might stay on the phone with you while you go to the store and load money onto the card. If this happens to you, hang up. It's a scam.
4. **Scammers will ask for the gift card number and PIN.** The card number and PIN on the back of the card let the scammer get the money you loaded onto the card — even if you still have the card itself. Slow down. Don't give them those numbers or send them a photo of the card. It's a scam.
5. **Scammers redeem the cards.** Once scammers get the card information, they can access the funds immediately, before you realize the money is gone.

Gift Card Safety Tip:

Gift cards are for gifts. They are not for payments between people. Never buy a gift card because someone tells you to buy one and give them the numbers. Whenever you buy gift cards:

Always keep a copy of the gift card and store receipt. Take a picture of the gift card and store receipt with your phone. The number on the gift card and store receipt will help you file a report with the gift card company if you lose the gift card or if you need to report fraud.

If You Are a Victim, Report It

Use the gift card and receipt to report the scam to the gift card company right away. Contact your financial professional to ensure that Lincoln Investment is notified and can help assist in the protection of your Lincoln assets.

The FBI requests victims report gift card scams to the FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center at ic3.gov. You can also make reports to the FTC at reportfraud.ftc.gov, the Better Business Bureau at bbb.org/scamtracker and/or to local law enforcement.

If you think you have given your personal information to a scammer, go to IdentityTheft.gov for steps you can take to protect your identity.

Finally, tell your friends and family. Help them avoid getting scammed.

Sources: Avoiding and Reporting Gift Card Scams | Consumer Advice (ftc.gov)
Gift Card Scams | BBB Institute for Marketplace Trust (bbbmarketplacetrust.org)