

Has an online love interest asked you for money?

Looking to start a new relationship? For some, that may mean meeting a new love interest online. Word to the wise: sometimes it's best to lead with your head and not your heart.

Millions of Americans use dating sites, social networking sites, and chat rooms to meet people. And many forge successful relationships. But scammers also use these sites to meet potential victims. They create fake profiles to build online relationships, and eventually convince people to send money in the name of love.

The Federal Trade Commission receives thousands of reports each year about romance scammers who create fake online relationships only to steal their victims' money.

Unfortunately, an online love interest who asks for money is almost certainly a scam artist.

Below are some tips to identify a real romance versus a scammer cruising for a target.

Signs of a Scam

- Professes love quickly.
- Claims to be from the U.S., but is overseas for a business or military service
- Asks for money and lures you off the dating site.
- Claims to need money for emergencies, hospital bills, or travel.
- Plans to visit, but can't because of an emergency

What to do

1. Slow down and talk to someone you trust. Don't let a scammer rush you.
2. Never Wire money, put money on a gift or cash reload card, or send cash to an online love interest. You won't get it back
3. Contact your bank right away if you think you've sent money to a scammer
4. Report your experience to:
 - Online dating site
 - Federal Trade Commission: [ftc.gov/complaint](https://www.ftc.gov/complaint)
 - Federal Bureau of Investigations: [ic3.gov](https://www.ic3.gov)