

# 10 Tips for Safe Shopping Online on BLACK FRIDAY

One of the many notable side-effects of the pandemic has been the surge in online shopping, as people stay home for longer periods. Those sales figures are set to experience a particularly pronounced spike on Black Friday, as eager shoppers take to the internet in search of a bargain (or ten). Delight at securing those must-have items can quickly be overshadowed, however, by falling foul of the retail risks that can await unwary buyers.

Here's National Online Safety's top ten tips for protecting yourself and your family while hunting for the deals this Black Friday weekend ...

## 1. TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS



It's safest to stick with well-known, reputable retailers. If a site doesn't look professional, or has weird pop-up ads, it's best to steer clear – no matter how tempting their prices. If something seems too good to be true, it probably is!



## 2. WATCH OUT FOR PHISHING ATTACKS



Email inboxes are flooded on Black Friday by retailers telling everyone about their deals. Hackers often try to use the traffic as camouflage; look out for emails with poor grammar, suspicious email addresses and pixelated images – these are all common signs you've been targeted.



## 3. MAKE SURE THE SITE'S SECURE



When you're buying online, look for a padlock icon near the address bar – or check if the URL includes "https" or "shttp". The extra 's' or the padlock mean you can rest easy: you're sending your card details and personal info via a secure channel.



## 4. PLAN YOUR SHOPPING



Before you go online, make a list of what you're looking for – and stick to it. With enticing deals everywhere you look, it's so easy to get immersed in bargain hunting and end up with a massive overspend by the time you log off!



## 5. LOOK OUT FOR LOOT BOX SALES



Video gaming companies also offer Black Friday deals, with as much as 50% off loot boxes in some titles. Children can also buy reduced-price games through their consoles. So if your child can access the online store or make in-game purchases on their device, it'd be wise to talk to them in advance.



## 6. READ THE REVIEWS



We've all bought something which sounded amazing online, only for it to be far less impressive when it actually arrived. Take time to read other buyers' views on an item – and think twice about anything that only has a small number of comments about it.



## 7. CREATE SECURE PASSWORDS



On Black Friday, there's a higher likelihood of you setting up accounts on sites you've never bought from before. Choose a different password for each: the longer, the better. It's best practice to use a mix of upper- and lower-case letters, symbols and numbers.



## 8. CHECK THE SMALL PRINT



Make sure you check out details like a seller's returns policy. It's so easy to shop impulsively on Black Friday and then be stuck with things you don't want because of a very small window for returning goods.



## 9. IGNORE INFLUENCER PRESSURE



Influencers can be great for finding out where the best deals are. But don't forget that sometimes they're being paid by retailers, and they can often cause people to feel under pressure to buy something – anything – just because it's Black Friday.



## 10. CHECK IT'S A REAL "DEAL"



Some Black Friday "bargains" you'll find were actually on sale at the same price (or cheaper) in the previous six months. Look at other retailers or price comparison sites to see if an item really *does* have money off.



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