

Recognizing Scam Emails and How to Handle Them

By Steve Boos and Amber Norkett

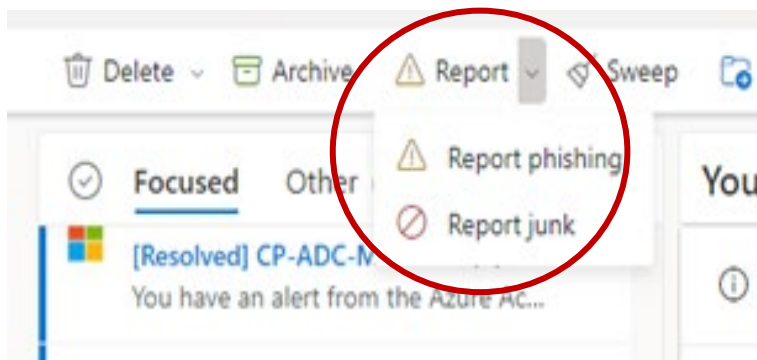
If you've ever received unwanted email advertisements, you may already be familiar with **spam**, also known as **junk email**. Spam messages can clutter your inbox and make it more difficult to find the emails you actually want to read. Even worse, spam often includes **phishing scams** and **malware**, which can pose a serious risk to your computer. Recognizing a scam email is the first step in protecting our devices and ourselves. While some emails are so outlandish that they are obvious fakes, others can be a bit more convincing. So how do you tell the difference between a phishing email and a legitimate email?

- Possibly the easiest way to recognize a fake email is bad grammar. An email from a legitimate organization should be well written. Read the email and check for spelling and grammatical mistakes, as well as strange wording.
- The message wants you to confirm sensitive information - legitimate companies never request usernames, passwords, credit card or bank account information via email. Emails requesting you to confirm personal information that you would never usually provide, such as banking details or login credentials are red flags. Do not reply or click any links, you should contact the organization directly via contact details on the official company web site – do not use any communication method provided in the email.
- Unexpected emails containing attachments are also big red flags. If you receive an email from a company out of the blue that contains an attachment, you can bet it's a fake. The attachment could contain a malicious URL or Trojan, leading to the installation of a virus or malware on your PC.
- The message contains unrealistic threats or attempts to blackmail. Phishing artists who use intimidation may send messages claiming to be a law enforcement agency, the IRS, or the FBI. Others will send messages claiming to have hacked your computer's webcam and recorded your activities. In either case, the email will threaten jail time or exposure if their demands are not met.

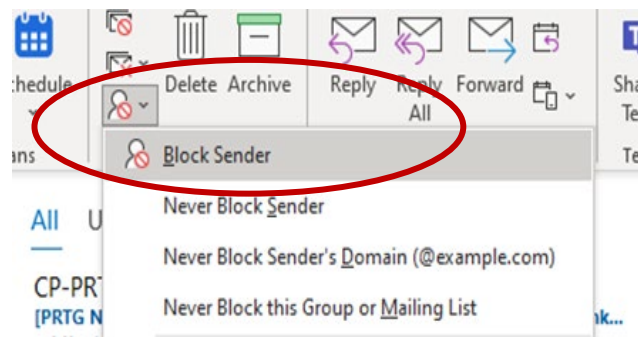
We have seen the number of scams coming thru our email system skyrocket in recent months, with some users being sent nearly 200 phishing emails per day. Our filters are sophisticated enough to prevent most of the phishing emails from landing in your inbox but phishers are continually evolving their techniques to bypass email security so we must remain mindful, questioning the legitimacy of all electronic communications.

If you get an email message that looks to be a scam, our next section covers how to handle Spam emails, how to keep legitimate emails from landing the Junk folder as well as helping to fine-tune Microsoft's spam filters.

Getting lots of spam/junk email? You can easily mark the messages as spam via the toolbar or by right-clicking for further action.



Outlook Online (webmail) Junk Mail Menu:



Outlook 365 (desktop version) Junk Mail Menu

Are legitimate emails landing in your Junk Email folder? Please be sure to mark the messages as “Not Junk” from the toolbar. We’ve included steps on how to do so in [Outlook online \(webmail\)](#) and [Microsoft Outlook \(desktop version\)](#).

Have you stopped receiving emails you used to get? Find one of the old messages and send it as an attachment to not_junk@office365.microsoft.com. To forward a message as an attachment in Outlook online (webmail), create a new message and drag the original message you want to forward into the new message. In Microsoft Outlook, select the message you want to forward and press Ctrl+Alt+F.

In the case of prayer requests and announcements, please be sure to check your Junk Email folder to see if they landed in there. If they did please be sure to specify them as "Not Junk". If they aren't in the Junk folder, please check in with sdriscoll@ssndcp.org to confirm you are subscribed. If you aren't subscribed please reach out to the help desk and we can assist with getting you resubscribed.

Turn off Focused Inbox in webmail (Outlook Online), the Focused Inbox feature separates your messages into two categories – Focused and Other. Messages that are more important arrive in the “Focused” tab while the rest are in the “Other”. *If you find you are missing messages because of this arrangement and would like all email to arrive in your Inbox you can [disable the focused feature](#).*

For additional information or help, please contact us at helpdesk@ssndcp.org or 1-800-373-7521

You may also want to check out our additional [tips and tricks page](#) where we cover topics such as trying the “New Outlook”, managing group contacts and creating a desktop shortcut.