

## Best Practices to Prevent Social Engineering Fraud

Fraudsters often rely on social engineering tactics to trick individuals into revealing sensitive information or taking actions that could jeopardize security or result in a loss of funds. Staying informed and proactive is key to avoid falling victim to these scams.

By following the below best practices, both personal and organizational data and resources can be better protected.

### **Avoid Suspicious Links & Attachments**

Access information and accounts via apps or known addresses when possible. Fraudsters often disguise malicious links and attachments.

### **Be Skeptical of Unsolicited Messages**

Be cautious of unexpected messages that pressure you to act quickly. Always verify authenticity before responding or sharing information.

### **Use Passphrases and Code Words**

Passphrases offer stronger security than traditional passwords as they can be longer and more difficult to guess. Code words can also be used to validate a known individual's identity.

### **Verify Before Sharing Information**

Never share confidential information without first verifying the person's identity. Scammers pose as trusted individuals or spoof phone numbers or email addresses to appear legitimate.

### **Watch for Red Flags**

Generic greetings, poor grammar, unusual addresses, urgent requests, or payment methods like gift cards, payment apps, or cryptocurrency are frequent red flags used by scammers.

### **Avoid Non-Business Applications**

Whenever possible, use USF email, Teams, or other USF-supported applications for business transactions, which help track a fraudster and allow prompt reporting.

### Where can I find more information?

 [USF Regulation 5.001](#): Fraud Prevention and Detection

 USF Office of Internal Audit website: <https://www.usf.edu/audit/>

### How can I report potential fraud or abuse?

 Notify your supervisor

 Contact the USF Office of Internal Audit at (813) 974-2705

 Report activities anonymously through the [EthicsPoint](#) hotline at (866) 974-8411