

# BBB Tip: How to Protect Yourself from AI and Deepfake Scams!

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**A**rtificial intelligence (AI) is changing the way businesses and consumers interact every day. While AI technology can be helpful and innovative, scammers are increasingly using it to deceive consumers in convincing and dangerous ways. From cloned voices and fake videos to realistic text messages and impersonation scams, AI-powered fraud is becoming harder to detect.

The Better Business Bureau (BBB) is warning consumers to stay alert as scammers use deepfake technology and AI-generated content to steal money, personal information, and trust.

## What are AI and deepfake scams?

Deepfakes are fake videos, images, or audio recordings created using artificial intelligence. Scammers can now imitate someone's voice, face, or writing style with surprising accuracy. In some cases, criminals only need a few seconds of audio or video from social media to create a convincing fake.

## These scams often involve:

- Fake emergency phone calls from a "family member"
- AI-generated celebrity endorsements
- Fake customer service representatives
- Fraudulent investment opportunities
- Impersonation of company executives or government officials
- Fake job interviews or employment offers
- Manipulated videos that appear authentic

Because the technology is improving rapidly, many scams can appear very realistic at first glance.

## Common AI scam tactics

### Voice cloning scams

One growing scam involves criminals cloning the voice of a loved one. Victims may receive a frantic call from someone who sounds exactly like a child or grandchild claiming they were arrested, kidnapped, or injured and urgently need money.

Scammers rely on panic and emotional reactions to pressure victims into sending money quickly before verifying the story.

### AI celebrity endorsements

Consumers are also seeing fake videos or advertisements featuring celebrities, financial experts, or public figures supposedly endorsing investments, cryptocurrency platforms, or miracle products. Many of these videos are digitally manipulated.

Just because a video looks real does not mean it is legitimate.

### Fake customer support

Scammers may use AI chatbots, cloned voices, or realistic emails pretending to be from banks, airlines, streaming services, or technology companies. These fake representatives attempt to gain access to passwords, payment information, or remote access to devices.

Job and hiring scams

Some scammers are using AI-generated recruiters, fake interview systems, or cloned company websites to trick job seekers into sharing Social Security numbers, banking details, or upfront "training fees."

# Warning signs of an AI-generated scam

## Consumers should be cautious if:

- The caller demands immediate action or secrecy
- Payment is requested through gift cards, cryptocurrency, wire transfers, or payment apps
- The story involves an emergency or high emotional pressure
- A video or audio clip seems slightly unnatural or inconsistent
- Messages contain unusual grammar, robotic phrasing, or awkward pauses
- A caller refuses to verify their identity through another method
- An investment opportunity promises guaranteed returns or “easy money”

Even realistic audio or video should not be considered proof.

## BBB tips to protect yourself

### Verify independently

If you receive an alarming call or message from someone claiming to be a loved one, employer, or company representative, stop and verify the information independently. Call the person back using a trusted number you already have.

### Create a family safe word

Families may want to establish a private “safe word” or phrase that only close relatives know. This can help verify whether an emergency request is legitimate.

### Limit personal content online

Scammers often gather audio clips, photos, and videos from social media. Review privacy settings and avoid publicly sharing excessive personal information.

### Slow down

AI scams often rely on urgency and panic. Take time to think before sending money, sharing information, or clicking links.

### Research businesses and offers

Before investing money, applying for jobs, or responding to customer service outreach, research the business at [BBB.org](https://www.bbb.org) to verify legitimacy, read reviews, and check scam alerts.

### Report suspicious activity

Consumers who encounter suspected AI scams should report them to BBB Scam Tracker at [bbb.org/scamtracker](https://www.bbb.org/scamtracker) to help warn others in the community.

## The bottom line

Artificial intelligence is making scams more sophisticated, convincing, and emotionally manipulative. While technology continues to evolve, one of the strongest consumer protections remains the same: slow down, verify independently, and never let urgency override caution.

If something feels off — even if it looks or sounds real — take the time to confirm before acting.

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*Kelvin Collins is president & CEO of the Better Business Bureau serving the Fall Line Corridor, serving 77 counties in East Alabama, West Georgia, Southwest Georgia, Central Georgia, East Georgia, and Western South Carolina. This tips column is provided through the local BBB and the International Association of Better Business Bureaus (IABBB). The Better Business Bureau sets standards for ethical business behavior, monitors compliance and helps consumers identify trustworthy businesses. Questions or complaints about a specific company or charity should be referred directly to the BBB at Phone: [1-800-763-4222](tel:1-800-763-4222), Web site: [BBB.org](https://www.bbb.org) or E-mail: [info@centralgeorgia.bbb.org](mailto:info@centralgeorgia.bbb.org).*