

Scams & online safety | Easy | 2 min read

How to check whether a website is real

Fake websites can look just like the real thing, so it helps to have a few simple checks. None is perfect on its own, but together they catch most fakes.

Checks you can do

1. **Read the address carefully.** Look at the part just before ".co.uk" or ".com". A fake might add extra words or swap a letter, such as "royalmail-parcel-help.com".
2. **Do not rely on the padlock.** The padlock only means the connection is private. Scammers can have padlocks too.
3. **Be wary of how you got there.** A link in a text or email is riskier than typing the address yourself or using a bookmark.
4. **Look for contact details.** Real shops show a UK address, phone number and clear returns policy.
5. **Check the price.** A brand new item at a huge discount is a red flag.
6. **Search the name with the word "reviews".** Look for independent opinions, not only the ones on the site.
7. **Look at the spelling and design.** Poor grammar and blurry logos are clues, though good fakes look polished.

Handy tools

- Use the **Check a website** tool from Get Safe Online at getsafeonline.org.
- Check companies on Companies House at find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk.

Be cautious about

- Pop-ups asking you to "verify" your account.
- Pages asking for far more than you would normally give, such as your PIN.
- Sites that ask you to pay only by bank transfer or gift card.

Safer habits

Bookmark the sites you use, such as your bank. Use the official app instead of searching, because fake sites can appear in search adverts.

If you think you have used a fake site

Do not enter any more information. If you typed card details, ring your bank on 159 or the number on your card. If you typed a password, change it on the real site. You can report scams to Report Fraud (formerly Action Fraud) at reportfraud.police.uk or 0300 123 2040, or Police Scotland on 101.

When to get more help

If you are not sure about a website, send us the address and we will take a look for you.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.