

Scams & online safety | Easy | 2 min read

Staying safe on public Wi-Fi

Free Wi-Fi in cafes, hotels, trains and libraries is handy. It is generally fine for casual use, but a few habits will keep your information safe.

Why care?

Public Wi-Fi is shared with strangers. On a poorly protected network, someone could snoop on what you do or set up a fake network with a convincing name, such as "Cafe_Free_WiFi". Modern websites are mostly encrypted, which helps a great deal, but it is sensible to take care.

Simple habits

1. **Confirm the network name** with staff before you connect.
2. Choose networks that need a password, where possible.
3. Be wary of a sign-in page asking for lots of personal information. A genuine one asks for little, such as an email address or a room number.
4. Look for the **padlock** in the address bar. It shows the connection to that website is private.
5. Turn off automatic connection to open networks in your settings.
6. **Forget the network** when you have finished.

What to avoid on public Wi-Fi

- Online banking and shopping, where you can.
- Entering passwords on sites you do not know well.
- Sharing files or leaving file sharing on.

A better choice

Your **mobile data** (4G or 5G) is usually more private than public Wi-Fi. For banking on the go, use your phone's data instead. Many phones can also share their data with a laptop, using **Hotspot** in settings.

About VPNs

A VPN adds an extra layer of privacy on public networks. It can help but is not essential if you follow the habits above. Choose a well-known provider, and avoid free ones you have not researched.

Keep your device updated

Updates fix security gaps, so install them regularly.

If you think you have been caught out

Change the passwords you used while on the network. If you entered card details, ring your bank on 159 or the number on your card.

When to get more help

If you travel a lot and want us to help set up your phone or laptop for safer use abroad or on trains, just ask.

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.