

Email TS <tradingstandards@warwickshire.gov.uk>

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Information from Warwickshire County Council Trading Standards and Community Safety: Safe internet shopping as Black Friday approaches

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Black Friday (27th November) and Cyber Monday (30th November) are approaching, and a third of all Christmas spending is also forecast to be online this year.

To help online shoppers, in National Consumer Week 2020 (16th to 22nd November) **Warwickshire County Council Trading Standards and Community Safety** have launched their top twelve internet shopping tips.

Warwickshire County Councillor Andy Crump, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety said:

“With more people shopping online this year, it’s very important that consumers know how to keep themselves cyber safe and understand their consumer rights if things go wrong.”

Follow our top twelve tips:

1. Shop early to avoid disappointment. If you want your goods delivered in time for Christmas, check the delivery dates and don’t leave online shopping to the last minute.
2. Try to use online traders you know and trust. Look at their reviews and ask friends and family.
3. Many bogus websites appear at this time of year ‘selling’ popular and hard to find products. But buy from a bogus website and you will only receive a fake or no product at all.
4. Always use a secure form of payment to pay for goods or services, for example PayPal. Never simply transfer money. For purchases over £100, consider using a credit card to give you extra consumer protection.
5. Don’t enter your card details into a website unless it is secure. Look out for the padlock sign and ‘https’ in the web address.
6. Use strong, unique passwords for your email and shopping accounts.
7. Keep your devices up to date. Make sure you install the latest software and app updates. These usually contain important security updates that can protect you against fraud and identity theft. Information can easily be found about how to install these updates from Apple, Microsoft, and Google. Even better, just turn on automatic updates so your device will update itself in future.
8. Turn on two-factor authentication (2FA). To give any online account additional protection, where possible, you should turn on two-factor authentication (2FA). 2FA is a way for the service you’re using to double check that you really are the person you claim to be, when logging in.
9. If something you buy is faulty or misdescribed, you have 30 days to return it and claim a refund. After 30 days you must give the retailer an opportunity to repair or replace it before you can claim a refund. These rights apply when buying in store or online.
10. You have extra rights when shopping online. You have a 14-day cooling off period to change your mind and return/cancel most goods or services purchased online from a UK or EU trader. The goods don’t have to be faulty, but you might be asked to pay to return unwanted items.
11. Keep your receipts as proof of purchase and if you’re buying the goods as a present, ask for a gift receipt.
12. To make a consumer complaint or to obtain advice on your consumer right, contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Service: 0808 223 1133. For more online shopping and safety advice visit: getsafeonline.org and safeinwarwickshire.com/cyber-safe-crime-prevention-advice-leaflets

Throughout National Consumer Week, look out for more advice on safe internet shopping on social media by searching #NCW20 and #SafeShopper.

Full press release: <https://safeinwarwickshire.com/2020/11/17/with-black-friday-and-christmas-not-far-away-be-cyber-safe-when-shopping-online/>

Please feel free to re-publish this advice wherever you feel it appropriate. Thank you for your support. If you no longer wish to receive these emails, please contact me.

Best Wishes

**Duty Officer
Trading Standards Service**

Communities Directorate
Warwickshire County Council
Old Budbrooke Road
Warwick
CV35 7DP

Website: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/tradingstandards

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