

5 Things to Never Search for on Google

Experts say there are some seemingly innocent search terms that could expose you to malicious actors. No matter how innocent your intentions, these Googles may lead to trouble:

THINGS YOU SHOULD NEVER



1. Customer service toll-free numbers.

Even the top-ranked results can lead you to fake phone numbers at which scammers will request personal information, including credit card numbers. You may also come across a malicious link that will infect your computer with malware. To contact a company, go to its official page for info.

2. Tech support. Scammers “spoof” websites that look like the real thing. You’ll be faced with a bogus phone number where they try to get payment out of you. They aren’t fixing anything, just ripping you off. Always find tech support links and phone numbers through official websites.

3. Financial services and apps. Payment apps like Venmo, Zelle, and PayPal make it easy to send money to a business or friend—but be careful when using them. Use these services’ official websites, or the app itself, to get any contact information you need. And take the same precautions with your banking activity.

4. Government programs. The pandemic has been rough on everyone, and you may be anxious to find out when you will be receiving some help. Unsurprisingly, criminals are just waiting for you to search for something like “Where is my stimulus check?” Such a search may direct you to a site that requests payment or installs malware on your devices.

5. Tradespeople. A result at the top of a search doesn’t automatically mean a plumber, contractor, or electrician is reputable. Before you give away any information or pick up the phone, check a review site such as Angie’s List or Yelp.