



The U.S. Embassy in Riyadh and the Consulates General in Jeddah and Dhahran frequently receive inquiries from people who have been victimized by scammers. These scams are attempts by scammers to convince you to send them money by using some of your personal information to develop a friendship, romance, or business partnership online and then exploiting that relationship to ask for money.

The most common scams we see involve calls, texts, email messages, or social media messages from people pretending to be U.S. citizens either in the United States or in Saudi Arabia. The scammers usually claim that they are in Saudi Arabia working in the oil and gas sector or as military contractors (either in Saudi Arabia or Yemen). There have been several cases of impostors posing as U.S. government personnel, including for an alleged Department of Higher Education—an entity which does not exist.

These scammers are very convincing and troll the Internet for potential victims, spending weeks or months to build a relationship. To back up their fake stories, they often steal photos of real soldiers, models and identities collected from internet websites. Once they have gained their victim's trust, the scammers create a false situation and ask for money. Scammers can be very clever and deceptive, creating sad and believable stories that will make you want to send them money. After the person receives the money, they disappear and do not respond to messages.

Before you send funds to anyone overseas, check to see if you recognize any of the following "red flags" as warning signs, and realize that you may be a potential victim of a scam:

- You have never met your friend / boyfriend / girlfriend / fiancé / business partner in person; all your communication has been strictly online.
- The person claims they have suffered a serious injury in Saudi Arabia and needs assistance to return to the United States, or claims they need money to travel home to visit a sick relative.
- The person claims they need your help to pay an "exit fee," or claim they need the U.S. Embassy to issue them an "exit letter" to take leave.
- The person claims they are being detained at the U.S. Embassy pending payment of some type of fee or passport problem. U.S. embassies do not detain people.

- The person sends you a scanned copy of their U.S. passport as “proof” they are a U.S. citizen, but the passport contains spelling errors, inconsistent fonts, and a “Photoshopped” image that does not meet [U.S. passport photo standards](#).
- The person claims to have been born and raised in the United States but uses poor grammar and spelling indicative of a non-native English speaker.
- The person claims to be in Saudi Arabia but asks for money transfers to a third country.
- You sent money to the scammer for visas or plane tickets, but they always have a new excuse why they cannot travel, often citing detention by military or immigration officials.
- The scammer claims they are a U.S. consular officer or someone from the Department of Higher Education—an entity that does not exist—who says they can help you get an academic record or degree.

If you believe you are the victim of a scam:

DO NOT SEND MONEY. Unfortunately, any money that you may have already sent is probably not recoverable.

END ALL COMMUNICATION WITH THE SCAMMER IMMEDIATELY. Do not attempt to resolve the situation with the scammer. If you feel threatened, contact your local police at once. Do not attempt to personally recover the funds lost.

REPORT THE SCAM IMMEDIATELY. File a complaint with the Internet Crime Complaint Center — a partnership among the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the National White Collar Crime Center (NW3C), and the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BIA) — at ic3.gov. Also file a complaint with the [Federal Trade Commission](#).

For more information on international financial scams, please visit:
<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/emergencies/scams.html>.

REPORT THE WEBSITE. If the scam originated through a particular website or social media platform, notify the administrators of that website or platform.

For actual emergencies involving a U.S. citizen who has been injured, hospitalized, detained or arrested, please contact the U.S. Embassy or Consulate General nearest to you for assistance.

Due to U.S. Privacy Laws, we cannot verify the identity of U.S. citizens.

Assistance:

U.S. Embassy Riyadh

Abdullah Ibn Hudhafah As Sahmi Street Roundabout no. 9, Diplomatic Quarter Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

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RiyadhACS@state.gov

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Al Safa Street, Al Muhammadiyah District, near the new American School building
Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
Telephone: (966) (12) 220-5000
JeddahACS@state.gov

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Between KFUPM and King Abdulaziz Airbase, Dhahran, Saudi Arabia
Telephone: (966) (13) 330-3200
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