



Street & Field Scams

(Personal Safety + Real-World Cons)



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Curated links and references for spotting scams that happen out in the world — in parking lots, at ATMs, during shopping, or through mailed items designed to get your attention or access your devices.

Use this page when something feels “off” in a public setting — like finding unexpected money, packages, or items near your car or home — or when you receive suspicious mail or QR codes.



Situational Scam Awareness

FBI – Common Frauds & Scams — Includes real-world and in-person scams that combine distraction, intimidation, and tech.

<https://www.fbi.gov/how-we-can-help-you/scams-and-safety/common-frauds-and-scams> ↗

National Consumers League (Fraud.org) — Tracks trending scams including parking lot and in-person theft setups.

<https://fraud.org> ↗

Better Business Bureau Scam Tracker — Search by region to see local reports of new real-world scams.

<https://www.bbb.org/scamtracker> ↗



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Local Law Enforcement Alerts — Many sheriff departments post “safety bulletins” about new distraction or car-park scams.



Check your county sheriff or local police Facebook page



Recognizing & Responding Safely

Don't touch or pick up items left on or near your car — bills, notes, or objects may be meant to distract you.

Stay situationally aware. If approached or followed, move toward people, not your vehicle.

Skip scanning unknown QR codes. Treat them like clickable links in phishing emails.

At ATMs or after bank visits, pause before driving home — look around and take a different route if followed.

Unexpected packages? Don't scan codes or click links on inserts; verify the sender via their official site.

Report immediately to local police, your bank (if money involved), or [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](https://www.reportfraud.ftc.gov).



Sam's Tips

If something feels staged, it probably is. Trust your instincts.

Check surroundings before unlocking your car. Approach from a distance with keys ready.



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Handle packages as if they might be phishing emails — don't scan, click, or reply until verified.

Snap a quick photo (from a safe distance) for reporting — don't confront scammers directly.

Stay calm — scammers want confusion and fear. Slowing down is your best defense.