

Online Dating Safety Guide

Your comprehensive guide to dating confidently and securely in the digital world. Created by the Cybersecurity Non-Profit (CSNP) to empower women with practical safety strategies.

GETTING STARTED

Choosing Your Dating Platform

1

Research Before You Join

Look for platforms with robust verification systems, active moderation, and clear safety features. Read recent reviews focusing on security measures and user experiences.

2

Prioritize Privacy Controls

Choose apps that let you control who sees your profile, location settings, and personal information. The best platforms give you granular control over your visibility.

3

Verify Safety Features

Look for built-in video chat, photo verification, blocking capabilities, and easy reporting systems. These tools are your first line of defense.

Creating a Secure Profile

Smart Information Sharing

Share enough to be interesting, but protect identifying details until you've established trust.

- Use a first name only or nickname
- Avoid workplace names, schools, or specific locations
- Skip photos with identifiable backgrounds
- Remove metadata from images before uploading
- Create a separate dating email address



Recognizing Red Flags Early

Trust your instincts when something feels off. These warning signs deserve your attention:



Profile Inconsistencies

Vague details, professional-looking photos only, or stories that don't add up over time.



Rushing Intimacy

Pushing to move off-platform quickly, declaring feelings too soon, or pressuring for personal information.



Financial Requests

Any request for money, gift cards, or financial help—regardless of the story. This is always a major red flag.



Avoiding Verification

Refusing video calls, canceling repeatedly, or making excuses not to meet after extended conversations.



Safe Conversation Practices

→ Stay on the Platform Initially

Keep conversations within the dating app until you've established trust. Apps track conversations and can help if issues arise.

→ Use Reverse Image Search

Upload their photos to Google Images or TinEye to verify they're authentic and not stolen from someone else's social media.

→ Guard Personal Details

Be cautious about sharing your phone number, social media profiles, or specific routines. Consider using a Google Voice number first.

→ Document Concerning Behavior

Screenshot messages that make you uncomfortable. This creates a record if you need to report someone or block them.



Video Dating: Your Safety Advantage

Video dates aren't just convenient—they're a powerful safety tool that helps you verify identity and assess chemistry before meeting in person.

01

Suggest Video Early

Propose a video chat after a few good conversations. It's perfectly reasonable and anyone genuine will understand.

03

Set Time Limits

Plan video dates for specific durations. Having a natural end time removes pressure and gives you control.

02

Control Your Environment

Choose a neutral background without identifiable details. Check what's visible in your frame beforehand.

04

Trust the Process

If they refuse video calls repeatedly, that's valuable information. Protect your time and energy accordingly.

Meeting Safely In Person

Before You Go

- Tell a trusted friend your plans, including location, time, and your date's profile details
- Schedule a check-in text or call during the date
- Share your live location with someone you trust
- Arrange your own transportation—never accept rides initially

During the Date

- Meet in busy, public places with good visibility
- Keep your drink in sight at all times
- Trust any uncomfortable feelings and leave if needed
- Keep your phone charged and accessible



Trust Your Instincts

Your Feelings Are Valid


If something feels wrong, it probably is. You don't owe anyone an explanation for protecting yourself. Your safety and comfort come first, always.

Exit Strategies Are Smart

Have a friend call you during the date as a planned check-in. This gives you a natural exit if you need one without confrontation.

Saying No Is Powerful

You can decline any request, end any conversation, or leave any situation that makes you uncomfortable. Respecting yourself sets the standard.

 **Remember:** Someone who respects you will respect your boundaries. Anyone who doesn't isn't worth your time.

Emergency Resources

Keep these resources accessible. You're never alone, and help is always available when you need it.

National Domestic Violence Hotline

Call: 1-800-799-7233

Text: START to 88788

24/7 confidential support, crisis intervention, and safety planning

Cyber Civil Rights Initiative

Visit: cybercivilrights.org

Support for online harassment, non-consensual image sharing, and digital abuse

FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center

Visit: ic3.gov

Report online scams, fraud, and cybercrime affecting you

Emergency Services

Call: 911

For immediate danger or threats to your safety, always call emergency services first

Cybersecurity Non-Profit

Making cybersecurity knowledge accessible to everyone through education, community, and practical resources.

Our Free Programs

- Business & Non-Profit Security
- Family Cybersecurity
- Kids Safety
- Senior Digital Safety
- Women's Security
- Parents & Educators

Everything we offer is completely free. Visit **csnp.org** to learn more, or explore our resources at **csnp.org/resources**.

