

CyberGuardLab

Household antivirus, explained

cyberguardlab.com

How to spot a job offer scam

<https://cyberguardlab.com/blog/job-offer-scam>

Independent US household comparison site. Not the vendor. Paid links below may earn a commission. Confirm first-year price, renewal, device limit, and refund terms at checkout.

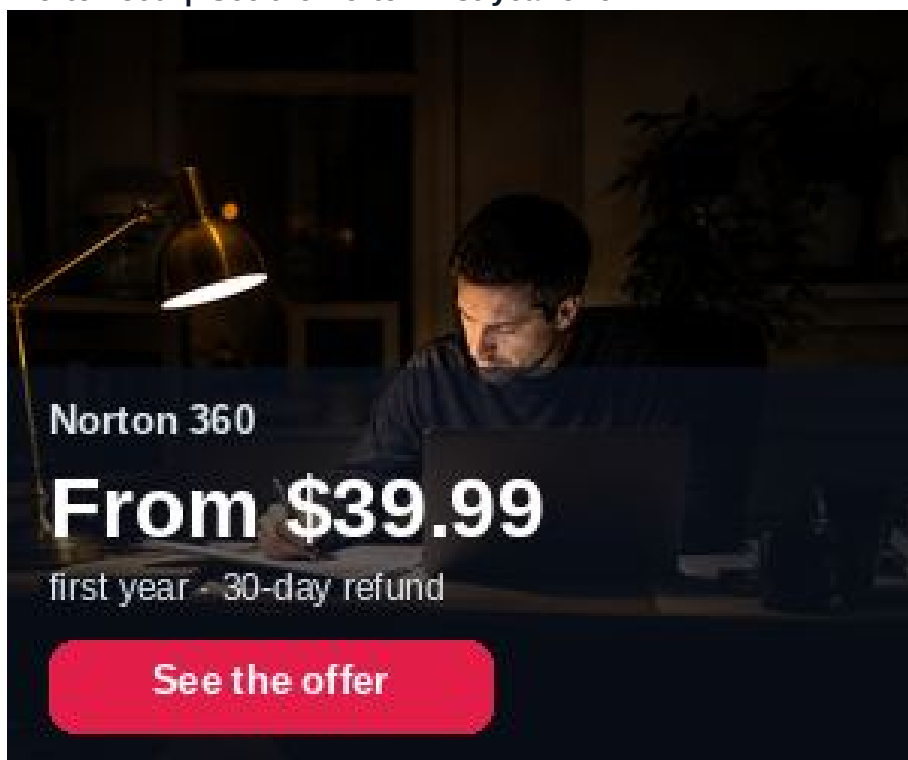
Job scams advertise the same way honest employers do - online ads, job sites, social media, even newspapers - then try to take your money or personal information. The FTC core rule: honest employers will never ask you to pay to get a job, and they will never send a check and tell you to deposit it and send money back. This guide is about fake job / work-from-home offers, not romance payment asks, general phishing emails, or gift-card payment demands outside a hiring story. You do not need antivirus to walk away and report.

1. Know the job-scam red flags

From FTC job-scam guidance, walk away when you see:

Paid link

Norton 360 | See the Norton first-year offer

A man is sitting at a desk in a dimly lit room, working on a laptop. A desk lamp is on to his left, casting a warm glow. The background is dark, with some plants visible. The text 'Norton 360' is in the top left, 'From \$39.99' is in large white letters in the center, and 'first year - 30-day refund' is below it. A red button with white text 'See the offer' is at the bottom.

Norton 360

From \$39.99

first year - 30-day refund

See the offer

[See the Norton first-year offer](#)

Offer page: <https://cyberguardlab.com/norton> Hop: <https://trysecurities.com/offer/norton?dtm=gg&cid=>

- * You must pay for training, kits, certifications, or placement - Real employers and federal/postal hiring do not charge you upfront for the job itself.
- * Fake-check / overpayment script - They send a check, tell you to deposit it, keep part, and send the rest (or buy gift cards). The check bounces; you owe the bank.
- * Huge money, little work from home - Almost certainly a scam per FTC.
- * Reshipping job - Receive packages at home, strip receipts, and ship goods elsewhere (often stolen-card goods). That is not a real job.
- * Pressure + weird payment - Same FTC scam signs: pretend, invent a problem or prize, pressure you, and control how you pay (gift cards, wires, crypto, apps).

2. Common household job-scam stories

- * Work-from-home starter kits - Pay for useless training or certifications, or get surprise card charges.
- * Reshipping / virtual assistant - Receive and forward packages; paycheck never arrives; phone and site vanish.
- * Reselling luxury goods - Pay for brand-name inventory that never shows up, or is junk.
- * Nanny / caregiver / virtual assistant check scam - Deposit a check and forward money to someone else.
- * Mystery shopper - Pay for certifications or deposit a check and send money back.
- * Placement / headhunter fees - Honest firms are usually paid by the hiring company, not by candidates upfront.
- * Fake federal or postal jobs - Official listings are free at USAJobs.gov and usps.com careers. Paying for a federal or postal job listing is a scam.

3. What to do in the first 15 minutes

- * Do not pay - No gift cards, wires, crypto, or training fees for a promised job.
- * Do not deposit a check and send money onward - Stop if that is part of the offer.
- * Search the company or recruiter plus scam or complaint - Complaints tip you off; silence is not a guarantee.
- * Talk to someone you trust - Say the offer out loud before you act.
- * Verify hiring through official sites - Federal: USAJobs.gov. Postal: usps.com careers. Prefer known employers and state workforce sites such as CareerOneStop.
- * If you already paid - Contact the bank, card issuer, wire service, gift-card company, app, or crypto platform immediately and ask to reverse the transaction when possible.
- * Report - File at ReportFraud.ftc.gov. You can also report to your state attorney general.
- * If you shared SSN or bank details for payroll - Treat it as identity risk: check email breach steps, credit card fraud first-hour, and IdentityTheft.gov when needed.
- * Optional device check - Only if you clicked a hiring link or installed remote software: run Windows Security / Microsoft Defender. Suite purchase is not required first - see Is Microsoft Defender enough?.

4. Safer job-search habits

- * Start with known employers, USAJobs.gov, CareerOneStop, and local government sites.
- * Never pay for a job promise.
- * Never bank on a cleared check that asks you to send money back.
- * Keep applications on official career pages when you can; be careful with unexpected DMs offering work.

FAQ

How do I spot a job offer scam?

You are asked to pay to get the job, deposit a check and forward money, reship packages, or earn huge money with little work. Those are classic FTC job-scam patterns.

Will a real employer send a check and ask me to buy gift cards?

No. That is a fake-check scam. The check will bounce.

Are federal or USPS job listings free?

Yes. Information and applications are free. Ads that charge for federal or postal jobs are scams. Use [USAJobs.gov](https://usajobs.gov) and [usps.com careers](https://usps.com/careers).

What if I already paid a scammer?

Contact the payment company right away, ask to reverse the charge if possible, and report at [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](https://reportfraud.ftc.gov).

Do I need antivirus for a job scam?

No. Refuse payment, verify the employer yourself, and report. Defender or good habits are enough unless you also opened malware.

If you still want a paid suite

Walking away from a fake job offer does not require paid antivirus. Microsoft Defender is a valid buy-nothing choice for many Windows households. What actually helps is refusing upfront fees, refusing fake-check scripts, and reporting. If the household later wants multi-device paid protection, use only these on-site paid links: [TotalAV \(paid link\)](#), [Norton \(paid link\)](#), [Bitdefender \(paid link\)](#), [McAfee \(paid link\)](#), [Avast \(paid link\)](#).

Sources

- * Job Scams (FTC)
- * How To Avoid a Scam (FTC)
- * [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](https://reportfraud.ftc.gov) (FTC)
- * Recognize and Report Phishing (CISA)
- * [USAJobs.gov](https://usajobs.gov) (official federal jobs)
- * Windows security overview (Microsoft)

Also read

- * How to spot a gift card scam
- * How to spot a romance scam
- * How to spot a phishing email
- * What to do in the first hour after credit card fraud
- * How to report identity theft on [IdentityTheft.gov](https://identitytheft.gov)