

PRINTABLE GUIDE

Check an online shop before paying

Online shopping is easier when you separate choosing an item from deciding whether a seller deserves your trust. A professional-looking website or encrypted connection does not prove a shop is genuine. Take a few minutes to check before paying.

Phone or computer | 2 min read | 5 steps

Before you start

- ☐ Know the item, expected price and maximum total you are willing to pay.
- ☐ Use an updated device and a payment method you understand.

1. Open the shop independently

Use a known website address or carefully inspect search results. Avoid following an unexpected delivery-fee text or social-media offer directly into payment.

- ☐ Done this step

2. Research the seller

Look for contact details, delivery information and returns terms. Compare independent reports of the shop. Be cautious of identical glowing reviews and prices far below other sellers.

- ☐ Done this step

3. Read the full order

Confirm the product, seller, delivery date, postage and total. Check whether a tick box starts a subscription or adds insurance or another paid extra.

- ☐ Done this step

4. Choose a suitable payment route

Use an established payment service or card and read its protection terms. Avoid a seller demanding bank transfer. Provide required checkout information only; guest checkout can reduce extra account creation.

☐ Done this step

5. Keep the confirmation

Save the order number and promised delivery details. If payment seems suspicious or your card is used unexpectedly, contact your bank promptly using genuine contact details.

☐ Done this step

Try it for yourself

Check a familiar shop's delivery and returns terms without placing an order.

☐ I tried the task.

My notes

Does HTTPS mean the shop is safe?

HTTPS helps protect the connection. A criminal can also run an HTTPS website, so check the seller, address and payment request separately.

Official help and the online guide

NCSC safer online shopping - <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/guidance/shopping-online-securely>

Google Chrome connection warnings - <https://support.google.com/chrome/answer/95617?hl=en>

Read online: <https://plaintech-guides.pages.dev/guides/check-an-online-shop-before-paying/>