

## **Romance scams rank number one on total reported losses**

People looking for romance are hoping to be swept off their feet, not caught up in a scam. But tens of thousands of reports in Consumer Sentinel show that a scam is what many people find. In 2018, Sentinel had

So what can singles do to play it safe while dating online? Here are some tips to help spot bogus suitors:

- Never send money or gifts to a sweetheart you haven't met in person.
- Talk to someone you trust about this new love interest. In the excitement about what feels like a new relationship, we can be blinded to things that don't add up. Pay attention if your friends or family are concerned.

- Take it slowly. Ask questions and look for inconsistent answers. Try a reverse-image search of the profile pictures. If they're associated with another name or with details that don't match up, it's a scam.
- Learn more at [ftc.gov/imposters](https://ftc.gov/imposters).

Help stop these scammers by reporting suspicious profiles or messages to the dating or social media site. Then, tell the FTC at [FTC.gov/complaint](https://ftc.gov/complaint).

1 Figures based on 21,368 reports submitted directly to FTC and by all Sentinel data contributors in 2018 that were classified as romance scams.

2 Median loss calculations are based on reports submitted in 2018 that indicated a monetary loss of \$1 to \$999,999. Reports provided by MoneyGram, Western Union, and Green Dot are excluded for this calculation as these data contributors report each transaction separately, which typically affects calculation of an individual's median loss.

3 Reporting rates per million population by age calculated using population numbers obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau. U.S. Census Bureau, Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Selected Age Groups by Sex for the United States, States, Counties and Puerto Rico Commonwealth and Municipios (June 2018), available at <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/ageandsex/nation-detail.html>.

4 Median loss calculations are based on reports submitted in 2018 that indicated a monetary loss of \$1 to \$999,10 ( )209982 (o)1 >>Br]TJ Oe1 (r)11 (t)-2 (s)5 ( s)5 (u)-1 (r)-2 (s)