2021

BBB Scam Tracker℠

Canadian Risk Report

*Trademark(s) of the International Association of Better Business Bureaus used under license.
2021 Scam Tracker Risk Report

HIGHLIGHTS

2021 SNAPSHOT

CANADA

SCAM SUSCEPTIBILITY

45.1%

DOWN 2.6%

MEDIAN $ LOSS

$250

UP 22.0%

2021 CHANGES

IN SCAM RISK

Monetary dollar loss fell in 2020, but rose again in 2021:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>$315 CAD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>$205 CAD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>$250 CAD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cryptocurrency scams became the riskiest scams reported by Canadians in 2021.

People reported non-financial losses:

- 50.8% reported losing time
- 41.1% reported losing confidence or peace of mind
- 27.4% reported losing personal information

Nearly one third

(32.5%) of all scams reported by Canadians in 2021 were online purchase scams.

52.7% of Canadians reported shopping online more this year as the pandemic continues.

56.0% of Canadians reported spending more time browsing online or social media.

Almost 3 out of every 4

(73.0%) of those targeted by online purchase scams reported losing money.

Online scams were more likely to result in a reported monetary loss than those perpetrated in person or via phone.

Canadians who reported being unable to keep up with their bills were more likely to report losing money when targeted by a scam.

† A survey was distributed to those who submitted a scam to BBB Scam Tracker in 2021; 292 Canadians completed the survey.

‡ Based on BBB Scam Tracker data from Canadians.
The riskiest scam type reported by Canadians in 2021 was cryptocurrency scams, thanks to high susceptibility (69.6%) and a median dollar loss of $1,500 CAD. Advance fee loan scams fell from the riskiest scam in 2020 to the second riskiest in 2021, with a susceptibility of 57.7% and a median dollar loss of $1,000 CAD. The third riskiest scam type reported in Canada was online purchase scams, again making up almost a third of all scams reported by Canadians. Notably, phishing scams rose from the eighth riskiest scam in 2020 to fifth riskiest in 2021. Counterfeit product scams rose from tenth riskiest in 2020 to sixth riskiest in 2021; this is likely related to the rise of online purchase scams since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

### TOP 10 RISKIEST SCAMS IN CANADA

The 2021 top 10 riskiest scams in Canada are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCAM TYPE</th>
<th>BBB RISK INDEX</th>
<th>EXPOSURE</th>
<th>SUSCEPTIBILITY</th>
<th>MONETARY LOSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cryptocurrency</td>
<td>195.6</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>69.6%</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advance fee loan</td>
<td>142.3</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>57.7%</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online purchase</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
<td>73.0%</td>
<td>$125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home improvement</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>62.9%</td>
<td>$661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phishing</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>$350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counterfeit product</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>87.0%</td>
<td>$89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>$201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fake invoice/supplier bill</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>$471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit card</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
<td>$80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweepstakes/lottery/prizes</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>$331</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: All dollars provided in CAD. Only records larger than 30 were included in this table.*

### BBB’ Risk Index

A Three-Dimensional Approach to Measuring Scam Risk

To better understand which scam types pose the highest risk, this report assesses scams based on three factors:

- **EXPOSURE** (volume of reports, as a percentage)
- **SUSCEPTIBILITY** (percentage of those exposed who lost money)
- **MONETARY LOSS** (median dollar amount of losses reported)

By combining these three factors, we gain a more meaningful picture of scam risk that goes beyond merely the number of reports received. We call this unique formula the BBB Risk Index.
Consistent with previous years and with American consumers, more women reported scams and men reported higher median losses than women. Notably, Canadian men again reported both higher susceptibility (48.5%) than women (44.4%) and a significantly higher median dollar loss ($369) than women ($188).
### 10 General Tips for AVOIDING A SCAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tip</th>
<th>Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Never send money to someone you have never met face-to-face.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Don’t click on links or open attachments in unsolicited email or text messages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Don’t believe everything you see or read. Scammers are great at mimicking official seals, fonts, and other details. Just because a website or email looks official does not mean it is. Even Caller ID can be faked.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 4. | Take precautions when making online purchases.  
  *Don’t shop on price alone.* Scammers offer hard-to-find products at great prices.  
  *Don’t buy online unless the transaction is secure.* Make sure the website has “https” in the URL (the extra s is for “secure”) and a small lock icon on the address bar. Even then, the site could be shady. Research the company first at BBB.org.  
  *Avoid making quick purchases while browsing social media.* Scammers advertise websites that offer great deals, but either don’t deliver the product at all or deliver counterfeit products.  
  *Do more research on those products you found via online search.* |
| 5. | Be extremely cautious when dealing with anyone you’ve met online. |
| 6. | Never share personally identifiable information with someone who has contacted you unsolicited. |
| 7. | Don’t be pressured to act immediately. |
| 8. | Use secure, traceable transactions when making payments for goods, services, taxes, and debts. |
| 9. | Whenever possible, work with businesses that have proper identification, licensing, and insurance. |
| 10. | Be cautious about what you share on social media. |

Learn more at BBB.org/AvoidScams
Atlantic Provinces  
7071 Bayers Rd., Suite 279  
Halifax, NS, B3L 2C2  
902-422-6581  
1-877-663-2363 (toll free)  
info@ap.bbb.org  
bbb.org/atlantic

Canada’s Northern Capital Regions and Quebec  
203-380 Hunt Club Rd.  
Ottawa, ON, K1V 1C1  
613-237-4856  
info@bec.bbb.org  
bbb.org/ottawa

Central Ontario  
903-30 Duke St. West  
Kitchener, ON, N2H 3W5  
519-579-3080  
info@mwco.bbb.org  
bbb.org/kitchener

Mainland British Columbia  
500 - 1190 Melville St.  
Vancouver, BC V6E 2W1  
604-682-2711  
contactus@mbc.bbb.org  
bbb.org/mbc

Manitoba & Northwest Ontario  
1030 B Empress St.  
Winnipeg, MB, R3G 3H4  
204-989-9010  
complaints@manitoba.bbb.org  
bbb.org/manitoba

Saskatchewan  
980 Albert St.  
Regina, SK, S4R 2P7  
306-352-7601  
info@sask.bbb.org  
bbb.org/saskatchewan

Southern Alberta & East Kootenay  
5-1709 8 Ave. NE  
Calgary, AB, T2E 0S9  
403-531-8784  
info@calgary.bbb.org  
bbb.org/calgary

Vancouver Island  
220-1175 Cook St.  
Victoria, BC, V8V 4A1  
250-386-6348  
info@vi.bbb.org  
bbb.org/vancouver-island

Western Ontario  
206-190 Wortley Rd.  
London, ON, N6C 4Y7  
519-673-3222  
info@westernontario.bbb.org  
bbb.org/western-ontario

ABOUT BBB SCAM TRACKER*  
Data in the BBB Scam Tracker Risk Report comes from BBB Scam Tracker (BBB.org/ScamTracker), an online platform that enables consumers and businesses to report fraud attempts they’ve experienced. These reports are made available to the public, thus empowering other consumers to determine whether they are experiencing a scam and avoid losing money. BBB Scam Tracker data informs BBB’s efforts to educate consumers and stop fraudsters by leveraging the power of technology and our network of Better Business Bureaus (BBBs) serving communities throughout North America. In 2022, the BBB Institute for Marketplace Trust, BBB’s educational foundation, will release a newly designed BBB Scam Tracker platform.

SCAM RESOURCES  
BBB Scam Tracker:  
BBB.org/ScamTracker  
Report scams and read about others’ experiences

BBB Scam Tips:  
BBB.org/ScamTips  
Definitions and tips for 30 different types of scams

Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre:  
AntiFraudCentre.ca

Competition Bureau Canada:  
CompetitionBureau.gc.ca

Royal Canadian Mounted Police:  
RCMP-GRC.gc.ca

Financial Consumer Agency of Canada:  

Office of Consumer Affairs:  
https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/oca-bc.nsf/eng/h_ca00000.html

*Trademark(s) of the International Association of Better Business Bureaus used under license.