



FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION  
CONSUMER ADVICE

Consumer Alert

## Do you use payment apps like Venmo, CashApp, or Zelle? Read this

By: Amy Hebert, Consumer Education Specialist, FTC | August 14, 2023



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Ever send money through an app like Venmo, CashApp, or Zelle? They make it easy to send money fast to friends or family. But what happens when it's a scammer on the other end?

Once you link a payment app to your debit card, credit card, or bank account, you'll be able to send money to your friend's or family member's account through the app (or with Zelle, from your bank account to theirs). Typically, you're sending money to people you know. So how do scammers convince you to send them money, too?

Scammers often pretend to be a [loved one who's in trouble](#) and asking for money to deal with an emergency. Or a scammer might say you won a [prize or a sweepstakes](#) but need to pay some fees to collect it.

In another scam involving Zelle — a bank-to-bank transfer app — scammers pose as your bank and tell you there's a problem with your account. To "protect" your account, the scammer tells you step-by-step instructions to transfer money from your bank account into a new account in your name. But that new account really belongs to the scammer, so after you make the transfer, your money will be gone.

The truth is, sending money through a payment app is like sending cash — it's very hard to get it back. Make sure you know who you're sending money to when you use a payment app. If you're not sure whether you're dealing with a scammer, contact the person, bank, or business at a phone number you know to be real to ask if they sent you the request. And know that your bank will never contact you to tell you to transfer money or to ask for personal information or passcodes. Learn more at [ftc.gov/phishing](https://ftc.gov/phishing).

And don't pay someone who insists that you can only pay with a [gift card](#), [cryptocurrency](#), [payment app](#), or [a wire transfer service](#) like Western Union or MoneyGram. If you think you paid a scammer, report it [to the payment app](#). Then report it to the FTC at [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](https://ReportFraud.ftc.gov).

Learn more at [ftc.gov/paymentapps](https://ftc.gov/paymentapps)

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