

Using Wi-Fi: Connect with Care

If you are traveling this summer, chances are you will encounter a Wi-Fi hotspot (network) or two.

Wi-Fi in airports, hotels, train stations, coffee shops, and other public places can be convenient, but they are often not secure and can leave you at risk.

Whether you are entertaining the kids by streaming a video on a tablet personal computer (PC), downloading new travel applications (apps) on your smartphone, or even taking your tablet poolside, there are precautions you should take to make sure your personal information is safe.

First and foremost, connect with care. If you are online through an unsecured network, you should be aware that malicious individuals may have established a Wi-Fi network with the intent to eavesdrop on your connection. This could allow them to steal your credentials, financial information, or other sensitive and personal information. It is also possible that they could infect your system with malware. Any free Wi-Fi should be considered unsecure. Therefore, be cautious about the sites you visit and the information you release.

STOP. THINK. CONNECT.

Here are six tips to remember when using Wi-Fi:

- Keep an updated machine. Having the latest security software, operating system, Web browser, and apps can help protect you from the malware and other threats you may encounter when using Wi-Fi.
- Do not assume that the Wi-Fi connection is secure. Many hotspots do not encrypt the information you send on the Wi-Fi network.
- Do not log into accounts, especially financial accounts, when using public wireless networks.
- Do not log onto sites that do not seem legitimate. Clues for this could include the URL being misspelled or not matching the name that you were given by the place of business. It is not uncommon for cybercriminals to set up a Wi-Fi network called free Wi-Fi in airports, hotels, and other public places.
- A cellular 3G/4G connection is generally safer than a Wi-Fi connection.
- Consider turning off features on your computer or mobile devices that allow you to automatically connect to Wi-Fi.