

Issue 1 Volume 11 March 2025

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ADDRESSING THE NEEDS AND SECURING THE FUTURE

Helping secure your world

# Security Solutions

## Editor's Note

In 2025, concerns have created new approaches in security and the manner in which we as individuals deal with these matters. With the upward trend in awareness of our personal surroundings along with ease of access to electronic security individuals sometimes face problems when selecting which avenue is better suited to their individual need. The articles in this quarter's issue are geared at preparing readers to make educated decisions on physical safety and security at home and on the Internet.

The first article discussed Seven Things You Must Do to Prevent Smartphone Hacking. According to Consumer Reports magazine, crooks may be planning a flood of hack attacks aimed at these portable devices, because most of us pay attention to security risks on our

PCs, but we're not as vigilant about our portable devices.

The second article asks a relevant question Should You Store Your Credit Card Details Online. The article writer believes ultimately, it's a personal decision -- convenience versus the risks.

Article number three gives LPG Gas Safety Advice. One main advice given is that you should always have all your gas appliances checked and serviced at least once a year, by a registered gas safe engineer. We then move on to discuss The Most Dangerous Rooms in Your Home, and creating some basic changes around the house that will go a long way toward keeping older persons safe while they will also feel more independent. Different rooms along with their risk factors are discussed in this article.

Article five highlights a retail issue faced by many; Why You Could Pay More at a Shutdown Sale. One simple way to avoid being ripped off includes checking the prices against those on offer elsewhere. You can do this at home on your PC if that's where you are when you spot an ad for the shutdown sale. But if you're already in the store, you can probably also make some comparisons on your Smartphone before you buy.

We do hope you find these articles and the safety methods helpful in some manner and we at **Amalgamated Security Services Limited** will continue to fulfill our commitment to provide quality service for all customers.

Regards  
ASSL Marketing Team

# 7 Things You Must Do to Prevent Smartphone Hacking

While most of us pay serious attention to security risks on our PCs, we're not as vigilant about our portable devices and the risks of smartphone hacking. Yet, according to Consumer Reports magazine, crooks may be planning a flood of hack attacks aimed at these portable devices, notably those using older versions of the Android operating system.



In fact, a type of malware discovered this past July is said to be posing a threat to hundreds of thousands of Android phones that haven't been updated to the latest versions of the operating system. The malware, which is called SpyDealer, steals all kinds of information from victims' phones including contact details and call history. Worse, it's also capable of recording audio and video without the user knowing and

even of taking screen shots while the screen is displaying confidential information. Investigations suggest that Android devices using versions 2.2 to 4.4 are vulnerable to the malware and that as many as 500,000 phones are still using these operating systems.

But how does the malware get onto the phone in the first place? Experts aren't that sure but they think it may have something to do with computer wi-fi networks that have already been hacked and which Android users then access. In other words, they don't necessarily know their phones have been compromised. And even though security software should be able to protect them, the crooks behind the software keep changing and updating it. It may actually have been around for as long as two years.

The best way to protect yourself is to update the operating system on your phone if at all possible, although some Android devices can't be updated to the latest systems.

Then, make sure that your security software is set to automatically update.

## Tip of an Iceberg?

Sadly, this latest discovery could be just the tip of an iceberg. The Internet is teeming with guides on how to hack Android phones and new viruses are being discovered every day.



Latest malware includes LeakerLocker, a type of ransomware that can lock up phones but also threatens to send your entire collection of photos to all your contacts. The malware has been getting onto phones through a couple of compromised apps that, at the time of writing, were available for download from Google Play. The "trojan" claims to already have downloaded the photos onto a server, so, it says, resetting your phone or using a past backup won't protect you. The ransom fee is between \$50 and \$65 but paying up won't necessarily protect you.

However, according to security software firm McAfee, there is no evidence so far that the malware has actually downloaded or copied any photos or other information from the phones. It could be just an idle threat! In truth, it's virtually impossible to seal off your phone against hack attacks or data theft.

## Man in the Middle

Even iPhones, which have the protection of Apple's intense app store security, can be vulnerable via interception of confidential information transmitted by some apps. This isn't an Apple problem but a

case of app developers needing to make their software more secure against these interceptions known as "man-in-the-middle" attacks.

However, there are certainly a number of things you can do to make your smartphone safer against the risk of malware or a hack attack.

## 7 Key Actions

Here are 7 important actions you should take:

1. Make sure both your phone operating system and other software are kept up to date. Software producers constantly revise and improve their apps, including "patching" vulnerabilities.



2. Before you install an app, check its terms and conditions to see what it proposes to do with your data. And when you install it, scrutinize the "permissions" it requests, such as accessing your camera, photos, microphone etc. If you feel uncomfortable, don't grant the permissions or uninstall the app.

3. Keep your phone physically out of reach of others, and keep it screen-locked, so no one can view your data. Don't allow your lock-screen to display

personal or confidential information.

4. Avoid using your phone on insecure, "open" wi-fi networks. But if you do, don't access sites that require you to give usernames, passwords and other confidential information. Consider using a virtual private network (VPN) to conceal your identity. See this article for more on VPNs:

<http://www.techhive.com/article/3158192/privacy/howand-why-you-should-use-a-vpn-any-time-you-hop-on-the-internet.html>

5. Don't install apps from third party "stores." Use only the official app stores. With Androids, use only Google Play or the Amazon app store. With iPhones, you can only use the official App store -- unless your device is "jailbroken." Don't jailbreak!

6. Don't reply to or click on links or text messages from sources you don't know. You may be opening your device to access from hackers.

7. Be alert to software that doesn't behave normally during use -- for example, strange sounds during phone calls or apps that seem to open by themselves. Run a check using your security software or take your phone to a service provider store and have them run a diagnostic check.

Reprinted from [scambusters.org](http://scambusters.org)

# Should You Store Your Credit Card Details Online?

How often have you bought stuff online, entered your credit card details and then selected the option that allows the retailer to keep your card details on file -- you know, so you don't have to re-enter them next time you buy?



But, think about it. Each time you do that, you're increasing the risk of those details being stolen. It seems like almost every day we hear about one company or another being hacked and customer records being compromised. If the victim company happens to be one you did business with and stored your card records with, the hackers likely have your details now.

According to latest research, about 94 million Americans store their credit and debit card details this way. That's two out of every three shoppers. And it seems buyers at both ends of the

age range -- oldest (people born between 1925 and 1945) and youngest shoppers -- are more likely to select this option. The in-betweenies are more cautious.

Matt Schulz, senior analyst at CreditCards.com, which commissioned the research, says: "There's no denying the convenience of online shopping; you don't even have to put on pants to make a purchase. "However, saving your payment information online not only increases the likelihood of making unnecessary impulse purchases, it can also leave your data vulnerable to hackers."

Alex Johnson from the credit-scoring organization FICO echoes these comments: "For online consumers, there's a trade-off: The more you store your payment info in a variety of places, the greater the odds of being a victim of fraud. "But saving your information offers a definite advantage in terms of convenience because you don't have to have your card on hand to make a purchase."

So, should you allow retailers to keep your card info?

Ultimately, it's a personal decision -- convenience versus the risks.

### No Way

Consumer journalist Lindsay Konsko, an avowed "no-way" responder to such requests, writes on the NerdWallet consumer finance website:

"This issue has more to do with personal psychology than with actual practicality. Merchants want you to store that information so you'll have a reason to come back, and so you can take advantage of your own choice to have this convenience."



However, allowing storage of your details for convenience is not the only option you have.

These days Internet browsers and many password managers allow you to store the information securely on your own PC, so you don't have to re-key it each time you make a purchase. Of course, this assumes you have up-to-date security software on your computer to safeguard this information from hackers there. Otherwise, you're probably less safe than on the retailers' systems.

Alternatively, many online stores allow you to use Internet payment systems like PayPal, which keep your card number a secret -- providing, that is, they don't get hacked themselves!

You can even memorize your card numbers to make it easier to enter them speedily each time you make an online purchase.

### Cut the Risk

But if you do opt to allow stores to keep your card details, there are a couple of things you can do to cut the risk of those details being compromised:

\* First, be sure the page where you enter your details is secure.

This simply means checking that the page address (in the address bar of your browser) starts with "https" -- it's the "s" (for "secure") that's important. You should also see a padlock icon and perhaps the word "Secure" at the start of the address box.

\* Second, be wary if you're shopping at a site that you're not familiar with.

Even though that "https" means your data is transferred securely to the retailer, you have no way of knowing how carefully they protect your info once they've got it, especially if they're based abroad.

As journalist Konsko notes, anything you put on the Internet "should be considered completely unsafe and available to the public. No matter how much a website boasts about its security, it may still be vulnerable."

The good news, she points out, is that if your card details are



compromised as the result of a data breach, your credit card company will probably cover the losses -- though you still, of course, have to go through the tedious process of canceling your cards and flagging up the loss with the credit reporting agencies.

Reprinted from scambusters.org

Amalgamated Security Services offer a full range of security service solutions which are inclusive of the following:

Response Services  
Alarm Monitoring  
Guarding Services  
Electronic Service  
Courier Services  
Assess Controls  
Data Services  
Cash Services  
Investigations

# LPG Gas Safety Advice

By [Steve Duval](#)

## LPG Gas Safety Rules

Living in a rural area has its advantages, like the freedom of countryside and the wild animals roaming around, the disadvantages though is normally, no natural gas supply to your home.



Roughly around 80% of homes in England are connected to the mains natural gas grid, the other 20% use either oil or LPG to cook and heat their homes. If you are one of the lucky people who live in the countryside, then you will know if you want to cook on gas, the only way would be to have LPG installed. This would normally consist of 2 LPG gas bottles, a change over valve that the bottles connect to and a cooking appliance that has been converted to work on LPG. You could even run your central heating system on LPG, the set up would be a little different, but basically the same.

Having LPG (Liquid Petroleum Gas) is just like natural gas, the only difference is you store the gas in the garden in bottles or a storage tank.

## LPG gas safety is just as important as natural gas.

Always have all your gas appliances checked over and serviced at least once a year, by a **registered gas safe engineer**. All gas safe engineers carry a gas safe card with details of what gas and appliances they can work on.

## Ask your engineer for his gas safe card and check all the details.

On the front of the card will be a picture of the person in question, an expiry date, which is normally the end of March every year, you should also see a license number which is raised off the card, this is for people with impaired sight. Now you have checked the front of the card, turn it over, you will see 2 columns, one for natural gas, and another for LPG, this is the one we are interested in. Let's say you want your new cooker installed, look on the card for cookers in the LPG section, if you cannot see cookers then the engineer is not registered and cannot work on your cooker. If any of the details on the card are not correct, you need to ask the engineer to leave your property.

One last check you could do is visit the gas safe register online, and check the engineer's details,

this will verify if your engineer is fully registered or not. It's always better to be safe than sorry.

Should you let the engineer carry out the work required, you will leave yourself open for prosecution, punishable with big penalties. The engineer could also be prosecuted and removed from the gas safe register.

### Gas Bottles

Most gas suppliers when they deliver your gas will normally change your empty bottles for you, but should you need to change a bottle over yourself it's a simple process.

### This is where LPG gas safety comes in.

First, you need to have the correct size spanner to undo the hosepipe connected to the gas bottle.

Depending on what setup you have I would advise switching everything off before attempting to change the bottle, once off, isolate the bottle itself by closing the valve.

Now once everything is switched off you can start to undo the hose connection from the bottle.

Swap your bottle over, tighten the hose and you will be ready to go.

LPG gas safety should always come first, gas in the wrong hands is dangerous.

If you ever have any doubt about one of your gas appliances always isolate it, or switch the gas off completely on the bottles and call in the experts.



For over 35 years I have been working in the Gas and Plumbing industry, so if you have a problem check over our website to see if we can help or advise you.

<http://duvalheating.co.uk>

Article Source:

[http://EzineArticles.com/expert/Steve\\_Duval/2304033](http://EzineArticles.com/expert/Steve_Duval/2304033)

# The Most Dangerous Rooms in Your Home and How to Make Them Safer

By Neeraj Sharma

One of the necessary aspects of caring for old aged people of your family is ensuring that they should be safe, while at the same time maintaining the maximum amount independence for them. Creating some basic changes around the house will go a long way toward keeping seniors safe while they will also feel more independent. One of the foremost rooms to concentrate on is the toilet.



There is no doubt that the bathroom is the most dangerous room in the house; however the hazards there are increased for the old. Wet surfaces, slick, little areas, and onerous appliances cause the bathroom to be the most hazardous place

in the house, especially for seniors.

No one ever believes that most accidents happen in the home, however falling down the stairs and a kitchen grease fire can happen in few seconds--even in the presence of careful owners. Through a survey, we learn that in England approx. 2.7 million folks were injured due to the common home accident. According to the National Safety Council, the main reason behind the death of many adults and kids in the U.S is due to home accidents, which is merely neglected by the people.



Another dangerous room in the house is the kitchen which produces open flames and has various dangerous types of equipment that can harm anybody. Kitchens and broom closets offer an array of harmful cleanup chemicals that also create problems for old aged people. The potential for danger lurks everywhere.

One of the best tips is to install a detector or any sensor within the toilet which will generate a sound once you enter it, and keep dim nightlights on to assist the aged with their trip to the toilet. Try to keep each thing in its proper place so that you can avoid some common home accidents.

Baskets are ideal for the counter-top to carry little grooming things and stop them from falling and becoming something to trip over.



Replace all the glass containers from the top with unbreakable plastic cups, and place a bit of adhesive backed rubber on the bottom to help them stay in situ.

Raised bathroom seats help prevent falls. Having a raised seat minimizes the gap between the user and the toilet. Using a raised toilet gives the older person more comfort and helps avoid any danger.

Article

Source: [http://EzineArticles.com/expert/Neeraj\\_Sharma/2351575](http://EzineArticles.com/expert/Neeraj_Sharma/2351575)

## Why You Could Pay More Instead of Less at a Shutdown Sale

Everybody loves a bargain so when you see a shutdown sale at a local mall, you may be tempted to race on over to join the treasure hunt. But, hold your horses! Is that store really closing? Didn't you see the same sign at the same store this time last year?



If you did, that's a lawbreaker. It's illegal for a store to claim it's shutting down when it isn't. If you know for sure what they're up to, you can report them to your local consumer protection department or state Attorney General's office. But even if it's legit you could still be conned -- by being charged more for a "sale" item than you might have paid before the shutdown announcement. It's possible they've marked down prices from inflated prices that never really existed. You may not be making the savings you were hoping for. Furthermore, it may not be the original owner who's running the sale. Sometimes an owner might sell the store's entire inventory to a

liquidator for disposal.

Some liquidators specialize in these types of sales -- moving inventory from one closing store to another, so you're not necessarily being offered items from the original stock. And, once again, prices are often marked down from the supposed "suggested retail price," which is a fictional number that's pitched to make it look like the new price is a bargain. "That means goods can end up costing more than they did before the going-out-of-business sales began," the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) warned in a recent alert.

So, how can you avoid being ripped off?

The first and most important rule is simply to check the prices against those on offer elsewhere. You can do this at home on your PC if that's where you are when you spot an ad for the shutdown sale. But if you're already in the store, you can probably also make some comparisons on your smartphone before you buy

This is a good first step even if the store is genuinely going out of business. But that's not all there is to it.

If it's a liquidator's sale, many sellers won't accept previously issued store gift certificates or credits. And they likely won't accept returns. If you buy, it could be yours forever, even if it doesn't work! So, check that it does work and that there are no

other obvious defects. And if it's a product that should come with a warranty, make sure the warranty card comes with the packaging. If it's not available and you still want to buy, check to see if the product can be registered online without a warranty card. Many manufacturers will accept this providing you have the serial number.

### **Shop Wisely at Outlet Stores**

Shutdown sales are not the only way you can be hoodwinked into overpaying for what seems to be a bargain. This is happening more and more at specialized outlet malls, where famous brand names offer their products at discount prices.



Shoppers should understand that oftentimes the products they buy at these stores may be defective or, in some cases, cheaper versions of the well-known branded products made from inferior materials -- such as plastic instead of leather. These stores are not breaking any laws, as long as they don't make dishonest claims. But they still might use that "suggested retail price" trick to make their products seem more of a bargain. Sometimes too the defects in so-called "seconds" may not be easy to spot without careful checking. It's not unheard of, for example, for

pants to have one leg that's longer than another, for seams to be unsewn, or patterns to be badly mismatched.

All of this underlines the importance of checking anything you plan to buy from an outlet store -- not just the price but the actual product itself. For instance, what does the product label tell you about the materials used?

You can often glean a lot of useful information by talking to a sales assistant in the store. You can ask them directly how an item differs from the ones available online or in the main store -- or whether it's manufactured specially for outlets only. Ask them to identify any defects in the product, and find out about the store's return policy. If you live some distance from the mall, it may not be feasible to return an item, especially if you have to pay shipping costs.

The lessons we learn from these two scenarios -- shutdown sales and outlet malls -- is that you shouldn't buy a "bargain" unless you know it really is a bargain! These days it's fairly easy to check the true value of something you're planning to purchase -- so resist the temptation to buy on impulse.

The FTC has a whole section of information and tips on shopping and savings. Find it here:

<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/topics/shopping-saving>

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