

# Technical SEO Research

Airbnb scams | SV: 1.3K | KD: 11

**Client Feedback:** 7/5

Jonathan: Feedback Complete ▾

Splinter: Feedback Complete ▾

Email to Siege: Sent ▾

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## U.S. Target Keyword: Airbnb scams | SV: 1.3K

- U.K. | SV: 80
- Canada | SV: 80
- Australia | SV: 20
- New Zealand | SV: N/A
- Ireland | SV: N/A

## Additional Keywords + longtail:

- airbnb refund policy | SV: 2.6K
- airbnb scam | SV: 1.7K
- is airbnb safe | SV: 1.4K
- airbnb refund | SV: 600
- airbnb hidden cameras | SV: 600
- how to check for cameras in airbnb | SV: 500
- how to get a full refund from airbnb | SV: 300
- when do you pay for airbnb | SV: 250
- airbnb refund policy bad experience | SV: 250
- airbnb fake listings | SV: 30
- airbnb fake reviews | SV: 20

## SERP Features:

## Seven common Airbnb scams

- Fake listings. Fake Airbnb listings happen when fraudulent hosts list properties that belong to someone else or don't exist. ...
- Inaccurate property descriptions. ...
- Phishing scams. ...
- Fake reviews. ...
- Hidden cameras. ...
- Identity theft. ...
- Extra charges.

Mar 2, 2023



AllAboutCookies.org

<https://allaboutcookies.org> › [airbnb-scams-to-avoid](#) ⋮

## 7 Airbnb Scams To Watch Out For - AllAboutCookies.org

[? About featured snippets](#) • [Feedback](#)

### People also ask :

Are there any scams on Airbnb?



What are Airbnb guest scams?



How do I know if Airbnb is safe?



Is it worth renting on Airbnb?



[Feedback](#)

### What's Ranking:

- [7 Airbnb Scams To Watch Out For](#)
- [Five Red Flags That Could Be Airbnb Scams](#)
- [Avoiding fraud, scams, and abuse](#)
- [Don't Let These 10 Airbnb Scams Ruin Your Vacation in 2023](#)
- [The 6 Most Common Airbnb Scams and How to Avoid Them](#)

### Internal Linking Opportunities:

- <https://us.norton.com/blog/iot/how-to-share-your-wifi-with-guests>
  - Whether it's your social media addicted niece, your **Airbnb** guest or the handyman you hired to fix a door, they all want access to your Wi-Fi password upon entry.
- <https://us.norton.com/blog/privacy/internet-privacy-third-party-cookies>
  - Maybe you've seen that cookie notification when you log onto **Airbnb's** home page to book a vacation home.
- <https://us.norton.com/blog/emerging-threats/what-is-a-ddos-attack-30sectech-by-norton>
  - More recently, in 2016, Dyn, a major domain name system provider — or DNS — was hit with a massive DDoS attack that took down major websites and services, including **AirBnB**, CNN, Netflix, PayPal, Spotify, Visa, Amazon, The New York Times, Reddit, and GitHub.

**Funnel stage:** MOFU

**Product links/CTA:**

- <https://us.norton.com/products/norton-360-lifelock-select>

**URL category-slug:** blog/online-scams/airbnb-scams

**Meta description:**

- Learn about Airbnb scams you should look out for when booking your next vacation and discover practical tips to avoid them.

**Title tag options:**

- 13 Airbnb scams + how to avoid them - Norton

# Title: 13 Airbnb scams + how to avoid them



[\[Image Link\]](#) | Alt text: A woman with a rolling luggage bag enters the front door of a home, worried it's an Airbnb scam.

**Introductory Copy + CTA Block**

**Airbnb scams are one of the biggest complaints people have about the company, which is home to over 6 million listings around the world. Knowing which scams to look for and how to protect your travel plans is a smart choice. So before you click that “Reserve” button on your dream vacation spot, discover 13 common Airbnb scams and how you can help protect yourself with**

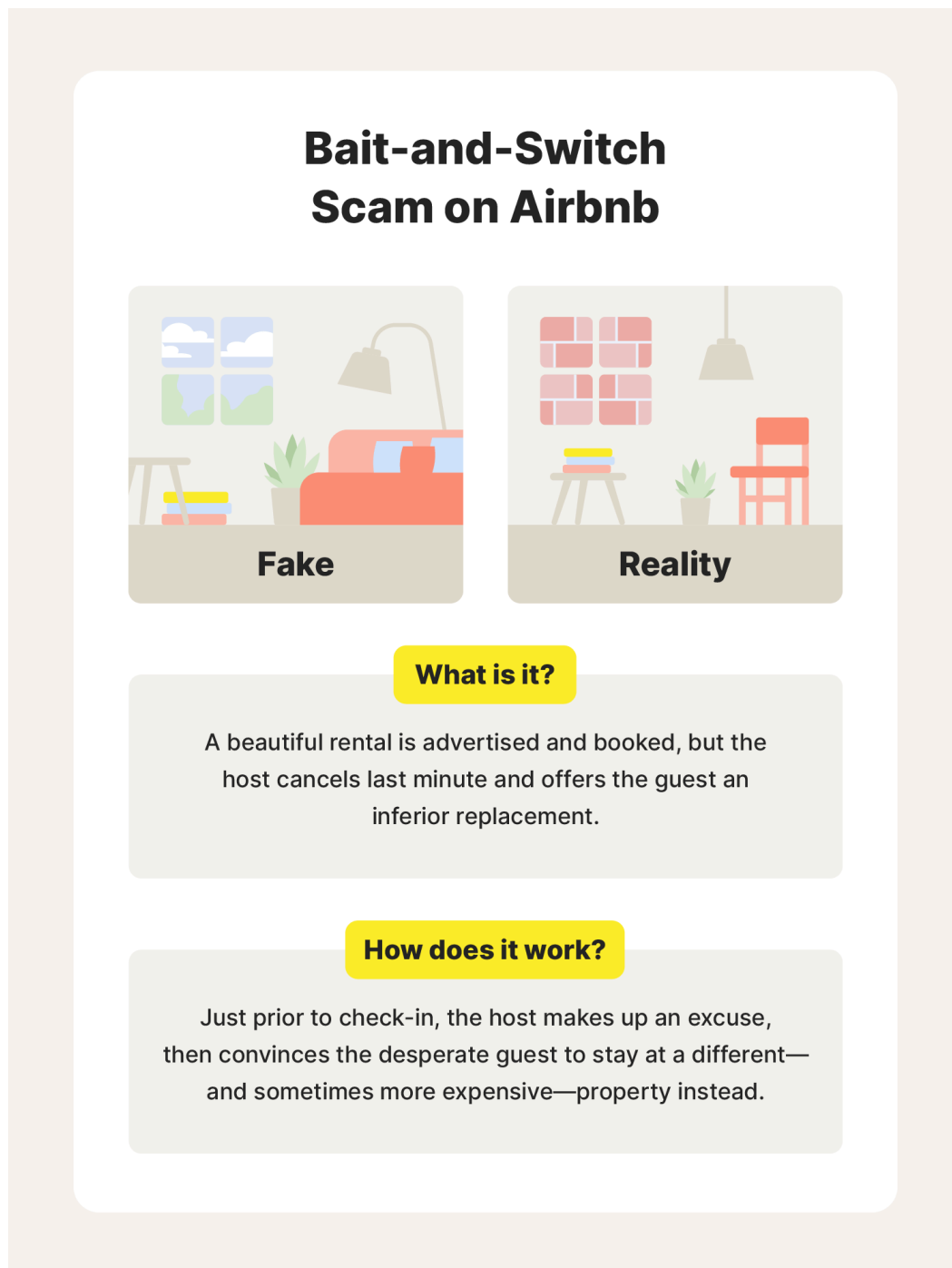
**security software and identity theft protection services like Norton 360 with LifeLock Select.**

**[insert Norton 360 with LifeLock Select CTA block]**

**[jump to menu w/ scams]**

- [1. Bait-and-switch scam](#)
- [2. External payment request scam](#)
- [3. Fake photos](#)
- [4. False charges after checkout](#)
- [5. Hidden cameras](#)
- [6. Identity theft risks](#)
- [7. Incorrect property details](#)
- [8. Nonexistent property scam](#)
- [9. Offline communication scam](#)
- [10. Phishing links](#)
- [11. Questionable reviews](#)
- [12. Repetitive property listings](#)
- [13. Unrealistic pricing scam](#)

## [H2]: 1. Bait-and-switch scam



[\[Image Link\]](#) | Alt text: A graphic showcases what a bait-and-switch Airbnb scam is and how it works.

The bait-and-switch scam involves a dishonest Airbnb host advertising a desirable rental, often at a competitive price, to pique the interest of potential guests. This property is the “bait.”

The “switch” occurs when, just before check-in, the host informs the guests that the original property is no longer available, providing various excuses such as maintenance issues or double bookings. The host then convinces the guests to stay at a different, often inferior and sometimes more expensive, property instead.

Since the guests have already committed to paying and may have limited time or options to find alternative accommodations, they might [feel forced to accept the substitute property](#). This makes it difficult for them to request a refund or report the scam, as they technically agreed to the switch.

#### **How can I avoid it?**

- Thoroughly research the host's profile, past reviews, and the property itself.
- Maintain communication through the Airbnb platform.
- Report any suspicious activity.

## **[H2]: 2. External payment request scam**

An external payment request scam can occur when a host asks a guest to make a payment outside the Airbnb platform. This situation may develop if a host requests payment for additional fees, such as security deposits, resort fees, incidentals, or local occupancy taxes, through an external payment method instead of using Airbnb's secure payment system.

Paying a host through an outside system increases the risk of fraud and compromising your personal data. Using the Airbnb payment system helps ensure transactions are secure and protected.

#### **How can I avoid it?**

- Always make payments exclusively through Airbnb's platform.
- Report any request for outside payments to Airbnb immediately.
- Never share sensitive personal or financial information with hosts outside the Airbnb platform.

## **[H2]: 3. Fake photos**

The fake photos scam on Airbnb involves scammers using fake, stock, or doctored images to misrepresent their rental property. This can be done to make the property seem more attractive or to create a completely fake listing with an address that doesn't exist.

When unsuspecting guests book the property and arrive at the given address, they may find that the property isn't real or is significantly different from what was advertised. The scammers are often able to collect money from the guests before they even realize they have been deceived.

#### **How can I avoid it?**

- Closely examine the property photos to check for signs of manipulation or inconsistencies.
- Research the host's profile and read reviews from previous guests.
- Use tools like Google Street View to help verify the existence and appearance of the property.

## **[H2]: 4. False charges after checkout**

False charges after checkout from an Airbnb occur when a host accuses a guest of causing damage or violating house rules and requests reimbursement for the alleged damages. In some cases, these claims may be fraudulent or exaggerated, with the host attempting to exploit the situation for financial gain.

If you're accused of causing damage, review the host's claim and evidence carefully. If you believe the charges are false, you can decline the reimbursement request and provide your evidence to Airbnb within 24 hours. The company will then review the case, and if they determine you're not responsible, they won't charge your payment method.

#### **How can I avoid it?**

- Document the property's condition upon arrival by taking photos or videos and reporting any pre-existing damage to the host immediately.
- Communicate with the host through the Airbnb platform only to document the conversation.
- Respond promptly to any reimbursement requests with evidence supporting your position.

## [H2]: 5. Hidden cameras



[Image Link] | Alt text: A graphic showcases a list of 10 potential locations where cameras may be hidden during an Airbnb scam.

Although hidden cameras in private areas are a violation of [Airbnb's policies on recording devices](#), current technology makes it possible for property owners to hide video cameras in a wide variety of common objects such as lamps, smoke detectors, and power outlets. These [hidden cameras](#) can represent a major risk to a guest's privacy.

It's important to note that Airbnb actually does allow security cameras in what they call "public spaces" and "common spaces." Their presence must be disclosed to all guests, although some hosts add the disclosure in very small print at the end of their listing where it's easy to miss.



### How can I avoid it?

- If surveillance cameras are mentioned in the property listing, ensure they are only placed in public areas, not in private spaces like bedrooms or bathrooms.
- Check the host's profile, read reviews from previous guests, and look for any red flags indicating potential privacy concerns or other issues.
- Inspect the property upon arrival by looking for small holes, lens reflections, and out-of-place electronics that might indicate hidden cameras.
- Use a flashlight to shine light on surfaces, searching for reflections that might reveal hidden camera lenses.
- Purchase an inexpensive radio frequency detector to scan for wireless signals emitted by hidden cameras.
- Report any hidden cameras discovered to Airbnb immediately.

## [H2]: 6. Identity theft risks

[Identity theft](#) risks on Airbnb can arise as a result of various types of scams and malicious activities. They may include efforts, [fake property listings](#), account takeovers, and suspicious requests for personal [phishing](#) information.

Each method aims to gain access to your private identifying data, such as your Social Security number, driver's license, or credit card details. It's essential to be aware of these risks and take preventive measures to ensure your personal information is secure.

Airbnb's policies continue to evolve in this area, with a [2023 update](#) requiring both users and hosts to digitally verify their identity in order to either book their reservation or list their property. Completing this process marks that person as "Identity verified," or having an identity verification badge. Although it is not a guarantee that someone is who they claim to be, it offers an additional layer of trust when sharing your personal information on the site.

### How can I avoid it?

- Research listings and hosts, reading reviews and ensuring the legitimacy of the property.
- Keep all communication, including the sharing of personal information, within Airbnb's secure messaging system.
- If something seems off or too good to be true, trust your instincts and report any suspicious activity to Airbnb.
- Never share sensitive data outside the Airbnb platform.

## **[H2]: 7. Incorrect property details**

An incorrect property details scam involves hosts providing deceptive or inaccurate information about their rental property in their Airbnb listing. This can include misleading descriptions, false claims about amenities, or even using doctored images to make the property appear more attractive than it is in reality.

Guests who fall for this scam may find themselves in a rental that does not meet their expectations, leading to a disappointing experience.

### **How can I avoid it?**

- Carefully read the property description and reviews from previous guests.
- Check Google Maps for the property's location and surroundings in an effort to verify listing details.
- Communicate with the host about specific details and amenities to help clarify any concerns.
- Be wary of listings with limited or suspicious reviews.

## **[H2]: 8. Nonexistent property scam**

Some scammers create fake listings for properties that don't actually exist or are not available for rent. In this scam, unsuspecting guests book and pay for the accommodation, only to find out upon arrival that the property is nonexistent or occupied by someone else who has no knowledge of the listing.

Scammers often lure guests with attractive prices or amenities to make the fake listings more appealing.

### **How can I avoid it?**

- Be cautious of listings with few photos, reviews, or descriptions.
- Check reviews, ratings, and the host's profile before booking.
- Always pay through the Airbnb platform.

## **[H2]: 9. Offline communication scam**

If an Airbnb host attempts to communicate and arrange bookings outside the Airbnb platform, they could have malicious motives. This is against Airbnb's terms and conditions, which require all communications and transactions to occur within the platform to ensure safety and security.

Scammers may try to persuade users to communicate via email or other messaging services, or to send money directly through wire or bank transfers instead of using

Airbnb's secure payment system. Some may claim it helps the guests and hosts save money on fees, but it is a surefire way to make your personal information more vulnerable.

#### **How can I avoid it?**

- Always communicate and pay through Airbnb's platform.
- Report any suspicious off-site payment requests to Airbnb immediately.

## **[H2]: 10. Phishing links**

[Phishing](#) links are a type of scam where attackers create fake websites or emails that closely resemble the official Airbnb platform to deceive users into providing their personal and financial information. This could put you at risk of identity theft.

These phishing scams may involve sending out bogus links to a site that mirrors the look and feel of the Airbnb site, aiming to trick users into entering their login credentials, credit card details, or other sensitive information.

#### **How can I avoid it?**

- Be cautious and verify the legitimacy of any communication or website claiming to be associated with Airbnb.
- If you receive a suspicious email or link, do not click on it, and report it to Airbnb immediately.
- Make sure to only access Airbnb through its official website or app.
- Always communicate and pay through the platform.

## **[H2]: 11. Questionable reviews**

Some scamming Airbnb hosts manipulate their ratings by obtaining fake or misleading positive reviews to inflate their reputation and attract more bookings.

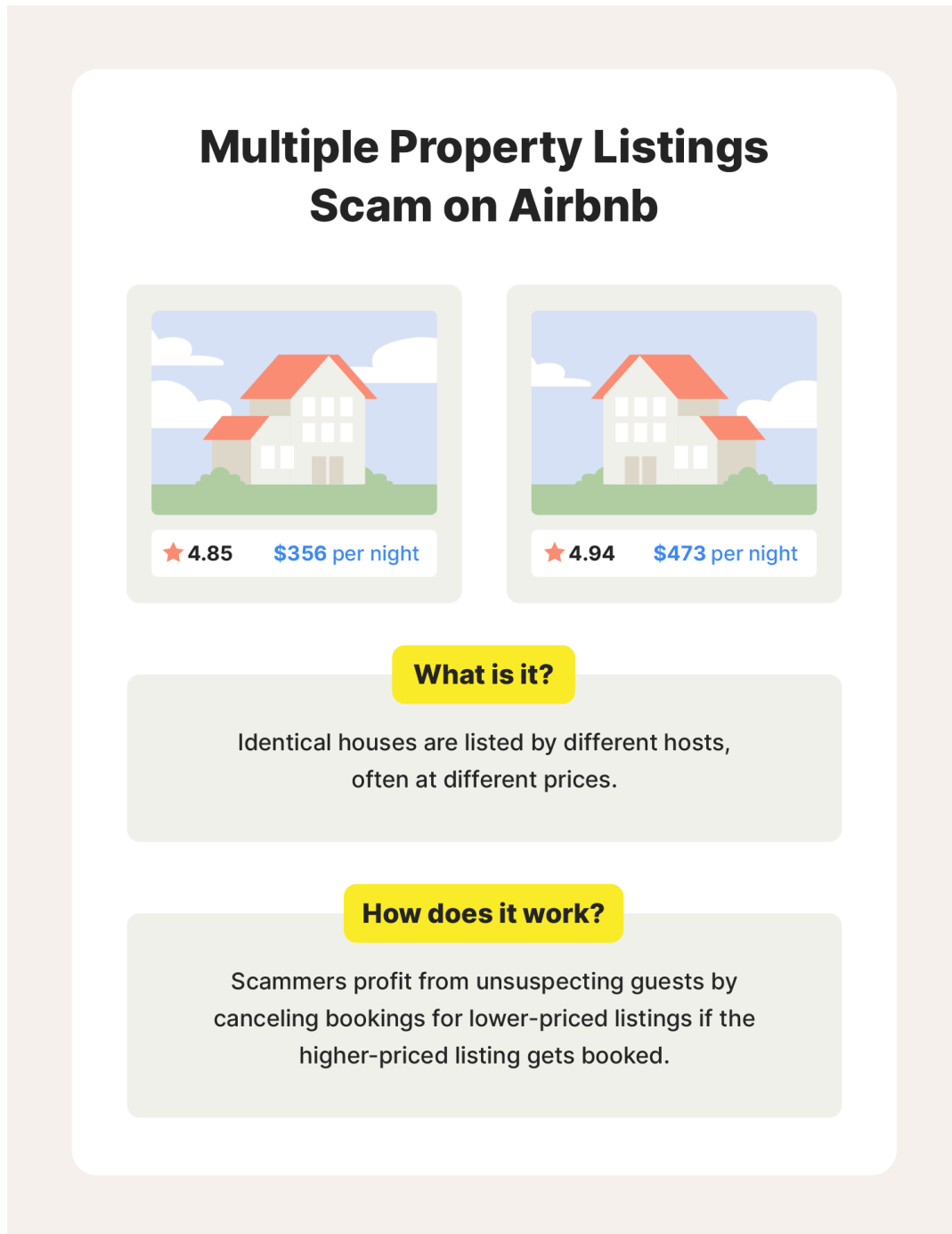
Scammers might accomplish this by asking friends and family members to create glowing reviews or even paying for fake reviews. They could also try to bury genuine negative reviews by piling up phony positive ones within the 14-day window Airbnb provides before displaying the reviews publicly.

#### **How can I avoid it?**

- Thoroughly read the reviews of a property, looking for patterns and inconsistencies.
- Pay close attention to detailed and verified reviews from past guests.
- Be cautious of listings that have a large number of short, generic, or repetitive positive reviews.

- Take the time to research the property, the host, and their overall reputation on Airbnb.

## [H2]: 12. Repetitive property listings



[Image Link] | Alt text: A graphic showcases what a multiple property listings Airbnb scam is and how it works.

Repetitive property listings on Airbnb involve identical houses listed multiple times on the site, often at different prices. This scam aims to profit from unsuspecting guests by canceling bookings for lower-priced listings if the higher-priced listing is booked.

This practice is against Airbnb's rules, as duplicate listings and fake listings for nonexistent units are prohibited. Airbnb assures the public it is committed to taking action against such activities when reported, investigating the listings, and potentially removing them from the platform.

**How can I avoid it?**

- Report suspicious listings to Airbnb immediately.
- Review the Airbnb rules and guidelines closely to be aware of what's allowed and what isn't.

## **[H2]: 13. Unrealistic pricing scam**

When a property is listed at an extremely low, unrealistic price to attract potential guests, it is considered part of the unrealistic pricing scam. Once the guest shows interest, the scammer may inflate the price when it's time to make the actual payment. This tactic can deceive guests into believing they have found a great bargain, only to be faced with a higher cost once they're committed to the booking.

**How can I avoid it?**

- Research the average pricing of similar properties in the area.
- Be cautious of deals that seem too good to be true.
- Always book through the official Airbnb platform to ensure your transactions are secure.
- Report any suspicious listings to the company.

## [H2] Ways to avoid an Airbnb scam

### How To Uncover an Airbnb Scam

If you suspect a listing is fraudulent, report it to Airbnb immediately.



Remove the price filter to find any duplicate listings.



Research the property and the host to ensure they have a solid history.



Compare the listing's price with similar properties in the area.



Check property details, images, and amenities to make sure they match.



Ask "Why?" if you are asked to communicate outside of the Airbnb platform.

[\[Image Link\]](#) | Alt text: A graphic showcases five steps you should follow to uncover an Airbnb scam.

While this list may leave you less than confident in Airbnb, there are some simple steps you can take to help protect yourself from experiencing an Airbnb scam firsthand.

- **Remove the price filter** from your search to see if a property is listed at different prices. If it is, don't book it.
- **Research the property and the host** to ensure they have a solid history and positive reviews. **Be cautious of new listings with no reviews.**
- **Compare the listing's price** with similar properties in the area to ensure it's not too good to be true. **Unusually low prices** may indicate a scam.
- **Check property descriptions, images, and amenities** to ensure they match the listing and are accurate.
- **Book and communicate** through the official Airbnb platform only.
- If you **suspect a listing is fraudulent** or have doubts about the host, report it to Airbnb immediately.

## [H2] Protect yourself from hackers and identity theft

Staying proactive when using Airbnb and other online travel options can help prevent you from landing in a sticky situation. Security software like Norton 360 with LifeLock Select can help reduce the risk of hackers, prevent account takeovers and monitor for potential threats to your identity. It even alerts you immediately if any of your information has been compromised.

[insert Norton 360 with LifeLock Select CTA block]

## [H2] FAQs about Airbnb scams

You may still need some additional clarification about the ins and outs of dealing with an Airbnb scam. The answers to some of the most commonly asked questions below should help.

### [H3] How can I verify a host is legitimate?

To help verify that an Airbnb host is legitimate, follow these steps:

1. **Check the host's profile:** Look for a verified ID badge on the host's profile, which indicates that Airbnb has verified their identity.
2. **Read reviews:** Go through the reviews left by previous guests. A legitimate host should have a substantial number of positive reviews.
3. **Look for Superhost status:** Superhosts are experienced, highly rated hosts who are committed to providing great stays for guests. This status can be an indicator of a trustworthy host.

4. **Communicate with the host:** Message the host through the Airbnb platform to ask any questions about the property or their hosting experience. A legitimate host should be responsive and provide detailed information.
5. **Check the property:** Research the property's address or neighborhood on Google Maps to verify the location and make sure it matches the listing's description.
6. **Examine listing details:** Pay close attention to the listing's photos, descriptions, and amenities. Make sure everything aligns with the host's claims and the property's appearance.

### [H3] What is AirCover?

[AirCover](#) is an Airbnb feature designed to protect guests when booking and paying for a reservation through the platform. It's free and included with every booking. This guarantee ensures that customers are automatically eligible for support in cases of access issues, fraud, damage deposit issues, cancellations, and misrepresented properties.

If the owner or property manager is unresponsive, Airbnb's customer support team is available 24/7 to assist within 24 hours of the reported problem. However, the guarantee does not cover cancellations due to events beyond the owner's control or traveler cancellations.

### [H3] How can I report scams?

To report an Airbnb scam, follow one of these methods depending on the type of scam suspected:

- If you receive a **suspicious message within the Airbnb platform**, click on the flag icon within the message to report it.
- If you receive an **email that seems like a scam or a phishing attempt**, forward the email to [report.phishing@airbnb.com](mailto:report.phishing@airbnb.com).
- If you **suspect someone of committing fraud using the Airbnb site**, contact the [Airbnb customer service](#) team for help and advice.
- If you come across a **fraudulent listing or a fake profile**, report it through the Airbnb platform by clicking on the "Report this listing" or "Report this user" options, usually found on the listing page or the user's profile.

Remember, never give anyone money outside the Airbnb platform and always report any suspicious activity to protect yourself and the Airbnb community.



### [H3] How does Airbnb handle refunds?

Airbnb handles refunds based on the host's chosen cancellation policy and the eligibility of the guest's claim. There are various [cancellation policies](#) that determine the refund amount and time frame for guests. They include:

- **Flexible:** Guests are allowed to cancel until 24 hours before check-in and still receive a full refund.
- **Moderate:** Guests are allowed to cancel until five days before check-in and still receive a full refund.
- **Firm:** Guests must cancel at least 30 days before check-in to receive a full refund. A 50% refund will be available if cancellation occurs between seven and 30 days before check-in.
- **Strict:** Guests must cancel within 48 hours of booking, and at least 14 days prior to check-in, to receive a full refund. A 50% refund will be available if cancellation occurs between seven and 14 days before check-in.

If a guest requests a refund before the check-in date, the host can issue a full refund through the Reservations overview. For refunds after the check-in date, the host can use Airbnb's Resolution Center to offer partial reimbursement.

Additionally, Airbnb's [Rebooking and Refund Policy](#) covers specific “travel issues,” such as noncommittal hosts, unsafe or unclean properties, inaccurate listing descriptions, and major issues during the stay. In such cases, the guest must provide supporting documentation within 72 hours of the discovery for their claim to be considered.