



## SCAM ALERT: Scammers Target Food Truck Vendors

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MADISON, Wis. – Football season has begun, and scammers are reportedly taking this opportunity to target food truck vendors in conjunction with sports and stadium events. The scammers are inviting vendors to participate in “fan events” and requesting payment of “vendor fees” through peer-to-peer banking apps such as Cash App, Venmo, Zelle, and PayPal. But if a business pays the fraudulent fee – for this event that does not even exist – they are unlikely to recover their money.

The scammers are using numerous Gmail accounts to contact their targets. By using multiple email addresses, the scammers can avoid automated spam filters. So even if one of their fraudulent accounts is shut down, others can still send scam messages.

This is not the first time this method has been used, and while it is currently targeting vendors adjacent to stadiums, this scam is not exclusive to sporting events. DATCP recommends that food truck vendors and similar businesses take steps to protect themselves:

- **Avoid interacting with unexpected and unsolicited messages.** Do not respond, click links, open attachments, or use contact information included in unsolicited and unverified emails.
- **Pause, investigate, and verify.** Instead of acting on a great offer right away, research the event details online. If there is no public information about the event, or if the event is real but its official contact information differs from the suspicious message, the message should be considered a scam.
  - Remember: Scammers can “spoof” an email address, disguising it as a trustworthy source. Even if an email looks real, reach out directly to the organization using official contact information that can be found online.
- **Do not pay fees through payment apps.** A trustworthy organization will not demand payment through a peer-to-peer banking app, cryptocurrency, wire transfer, or with pre-paid gift cards.

For more information and consumer protection resources or to file a complaint, visit DATCP’s Consumer Protection webpage at [ConsumerProtection.wi.gov](https://www.datcp.wisconsin.gov/consumer-protection) or contact the Consumer Protection Hotline at (800) 422-7128 or [DATCPHotline@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DATCPHotline@wisconsin.gov).

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