

Social Engineering Red Flags

FROM:

- I don't recognize the sender's email address as someone I **ordinarily communicate with**.
- This email is from **someone outside my circle of friends and family and it's not something we emailed about before**.
- This email was sent from **someone inside my circle of friends and family** or from a vendor, but is **very unusual or out of character**.
- Is the sender's email address **from a suspicious domain?** (like micorsoft-support.com)
- **I don't know the sender personally** and they **were not vouched for** by someone I trust.
- **I don't have any relationship and no past communications** with the sender.
- This is an **unexpected or unusual email** with an **embedded hyperlink or an attachment** from someone I hadn't communicated with recently.

TO:

- I was cc'd on an email sent to one or more people, but I **don't personally know** the other people it was sent to.
- I received an email that was also sent to an **unusual mix of people**. For example a seemingly random group of people whose last names start with the same letter or a whole list of unrelated addresses.

SUBJECT:

- Did I get an email with a subject line that is **irrelevant or does not match** the content?
- Is the email message a reply to something I **never sent or requested?**

DATE:

- Did I receive an email that I normally would get during regular daytime hours, but it was **sent at an unusual time** like 3 a.m.?

HYPERLINKS:

- I hover my mouse over a hyperlink that's displayed in the email message, but the **link to address is for a different web site**. (This is a **big red flag**.)
- I received an email that only has **long hyperlinks with no further information** and the rest of the email is completely blank.
- I received an email with a **hyperlink that is a misspelling** of a known web site. For instance, www.bankofamerica.com - the "m" is really two characters - "r & n")

CONTENT:

- Is the sender asking me to click on a link or open an attachment to **avoid a negative consequence**, or to **gain something of value?**
- Is the email **out of the ordinary**, or does it have **bad grammar or spelling errors?**
- Is the sender asking me to click a link or open up an attachment that **seems odd or illogical?**
- Do I have an **uncomfortable gut feeling** about the sender's request to open an attachment or click a link?
- Is the email asking me to look at a **compromising or embarrassing picture** of myself or someone I know?

ATTACHMENTS:

- The sender included an email attachment that I **was not expecting** or that **makes no sense** in relation to the email message. (This sender doesn't ordinarily send me these types of attachment(s).)
- I see an attachment with a **possibly dangerous file type**. The only file type that is **always safe to click on is a .TXT file**.)

