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TLP:CLEAR

[FB-ISAO Current Threat Level](#)

FB-ISAO Physical Threat Level:

Elevated

FB-ISAO has assessed the general Physical Threat Level for US Faith-Based Organizations as “**ELEVATED**.” As per FB-ISAO’s definitions of the Physical Threat Levels, “**ELEVATED**” means FB-ISAO is unaware of any specific events, but there is a concern that an event is more likely than normal.

FB-ISAO Cyber Threat Level:

Elevated

FB-ISAO has assessed the general Cyber Threat Level for US Faith-Based Organizations as “**ELEVATED**.” As per FB-ISAO’s definitions of the Cyber Threat Levels, “**ELEVATED**” means FB-ISAO is unaware of any specific events, but there is a concern that an event is more likely than normal.

Stories

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FB-ISAO Newsletter

Guess Who Prepares for the Holidays All Year Long?



If you guessed **Santa** - you are right! And if you guessed **SCAMMERS** - you are also right!

On 15 November 2023, in a [Public Service Announcement](#), “The FBI warns of criminals targeting online shoppers and sellers during the upcoming holiday season. During the

2022 holiday shopping season, the FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) received reports from almost **12,000** victims reporting non-payment/non-delivery scams, resulting in losses over **\$73 million**. Criminals use a multitude of methods to entice and target victims intending to purchase or sell an item online.”

In addition to the usual “too good to be true” spam and scams from suspicious sites, phishing emails, or ads offering items at inconceivable discounts, **an increase in holiday bonus gift card impersonation scams should be anticipated**. Whatever the financial or information-stealing theme, employees should be repeatedly reminded to **never act on such requests**. But since it may be excruciatingly difficult to tell “the boss” no, it is up to bosses and leaders to empower employees and volunteers to not act and to report said activity. Likewise, it is up to bosses and leaders to make any such special, secret, or surprise requests in-person, and not through an email or text.

While faith-based and charitable organizations are prime targets for holiday gift card impersonation scams of good cheer, there are other tactics to be wary, especially with the increased use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in scams. For more information members can refer to the FB-ISAO Weekly Report titled, “AI Impact on Phishing” dated 21 September 2023. And for additional guidance, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) makes a [Shopping Safely Online](#) resource available.

All that glitters is not gold, according to [FBI Springfield Illinois Office](#), “As scammers continue to perfect their skills, take time to conduct due diligence to thwart their efforts,” said FBI Springfield Field Office Special Agent in Charge David Nanz. “Slow down, look for red flags, and always protect your personal information. Going directly to a reputable source is the safest way to verify the legitimacy of a transaction.”

Common Scams

Online Shopping Scams

- ▶ Scammers often offer too-good-to-be-true deals via phishing emails, texts, or advertisements. Such schemes may offer brand-name merchandise at extremely low prices or offer gift cards as an incentive.
- ▶ Consumers should steer clear of untrustworthy sites or ads offering items at unrealistic discounts or with special coupons. [Continue reading about common holidays scams.](#)

FB-ISAO Advisory Board

Get to Know the Board of Advisors

Contact Us

Email

Info@faithbased-isao.org

Website

www.faithbased-isao.org

Not Yet a Member of FB-ISAO?

How to join...

Not Yet on FB-ISAO Slack? You Need to Be!

Write to membership

Selected Upcoming FB-ISAO Events. Visit the [events page](#) for a complete listing.

Community Meeting	14 December at 12:00pm ET
FireArms in the House - Overview	03 January at 12:00pm ET
Office Hours. (Meeting Invitations sent to all members via email.)	30 January 2024 at 1:00pm ET



What You should Know: Threat Guide

The FBI released the [Hate Crime Threat Guide](#) reviewing the types of threats that can be communicated. Below are the types of threats.

- ▶ **Physical Threat.** A physical threat is an in-person True Threat which is deemed to place the recipient or others in imminent danger.
- ▶ **Verbal Threat.** A verbal threat is an in-person True Threat that is deemed not to place the recipient in immediate danger.
- ▶ **Phoned Threat.** A phoned True Threat is one received telephonically.
- ▶ **Electronic Threat.** An electronic threat is a True Threat received over the internet, such as through email or social media.
- ▶ **Written or Visual Threat.** A written or visual True Threat is one that is received in a written or graphic manner, such as handwritten notes or graffiti.

Based on the above definition of threats, organizations are encouraged to review the information above and to provide additional organization-specific training on how to handle such incidents. Training should include security teams and members. Additionally, organizations should critically assess their plans to determine if they have the appropriate procedures in place to handle all the types of threats defined above.



Spotlight: The Defenders

Original Poem By Clement Clarke Moore

'Twas the time before the holidays, when all through the land
 Threat Actors were stirring, just as they planned;
 The defenses were tested by all those who care,
 In hopes that the bad actors just wouldn't dare;
 The practitioners were nestled all snug in their beds,
 While visions of preparedness danced in their heads;
 And Mayya in her 'kerchief, and Andy his cap,
 Had just settled down for a long winter's nap,
 When out on the campus there arose such a clatter,
 We sprang on FB-ISAO Slack to see what was the matter.
 Away to the channel we flew like a flash,
 Tore open the messages and threw up the hashtags.
 The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow
 Gave the lustre of mid-day to security practitioners below,
 When, what to our wondering eyes should appear,
 But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny defenders,
 With a little old driver, so lively and quick,
 We knew in a moment it isn't a trick.
 More rapid than eagles the defenders they came,
 And they whistled, and shouted, and called each other by name.