



Ministry of Meteorology Energy
Information, Disaster Management,
Environment, Communications and
Climate Change

TLP: Clear¹

Security Alert on Posting Fake Scams Online Accommodation Booking Platforms

Dear Constituents,

CERT Tonga recently received a report of posting fake scam online accommodation booking platform by scammers. This was carried out with the intention to take advantage on those who uses online bookings. Scammers can steal information such as:

- guest reservation data
- personal information of employees and guests
- credit card information and
- money by tricking employees or compromising systems.

REMEMBER, being cautious and skeptical can help you avoid falling victim to fake list scams.

How it works

Here are steps of how a scammer tries to get hold of your credentials as well as stealing personal information.

1. The scammer needs to bypass defenses and upload photos of either someone else's listing or a listing that does not actually exist.
2. If the scammer manage to access, he/she then has to convince you to communicate with them off of the actual website or app. This is carried out by giving you personal contact information to lure you into paying directly and taking off with your money.
3. In this case, the scammer will still convince you to send the money directly to them instead of usually receiving payment through the secure payment system. The scammer may ask you to wire or transfer the money directly due to a problem with the platform or send you to a fake payment site.

1 CERT Tonga adopts the [Traffic Light Protocol](#)

What to do

CERT Tonga urges users who uses booking online to be more vigilant. Here are tips to assist you:

- **Research:** Always research the company or organization offering the list. Legitimate companies will have a track record and visible reviews or testimonials.
- **Verify the Source:** Check if the source of the list is credible. Be wary of lists offered by unfamiliar or unverified sources, especially if they ask for personal information or payment upfront.
- **Too Good To Be True:** If the offer seems too good to be true, it probably is. Be cautious of lists promising unrealistic benefits or outcomes.
- **Seek Recommendations:** If you are unsure about a list, seek recommendations from trusted sources or consult with professionals in the relevant field before making any commitments.
- **Protect Personal Information:** Never share personal or financial information with unknown sources or over insecure channels.

Reference

- <https://news.airbnb.com/what-were-doing-to-prevent-fake-listing-scams/>
- <https://partner.booking.com/en-gb/help/legal-security/security/online-security-awareness-phishing>

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