

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, October 8, 2014

Connie Ress / Abigail Lootens
Department of Consumer Affairs
(212) 436-0042
press@dca.nyc.gov

DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS REMINDS NEW YORKERS TO STAY SAFE ONLINE FOR NATIONAL CYBER SECURITY AWARENESS MONTH

October is National Cyber Security Awareness Month, a moment for everyone to think carefully about how protected they are online and take steps to being safer. Below are tips from the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) on how you can enjoy your time online without giving away your personal information. DCA's ongoing consumer tips can help New Yorkers stay safe in the marketplace.

"We lead digital lives but being a consumer online should not mean exposing yourself to the dangers of cyberspace like identity theft and scams," said DCA Commissioner Julie Menin. "Cyber Security Awareness Month is a great moment to step back and think long and hard about how we can navigate the Internet safely."

- **Create strong passwords and keep them safe.** Create unique passwords for each online account and make sure they have capital and lowercase letters, numbers and symbols. Never share your password with others and change it several times a year.
- **Safeguard your personal information.** Avoid giving personal information online, by email or on social media sites. Never click on unfamiliar email links even if they are from sources you trust; they could be "phishing" scams that trick you into sharing personal information by looking trustworthy. And remember email addresses can be spoofed (or faked) to look like they are from someone you know.
- **Keep your machine protected.** Protect your computer, tablet and smartphone against viruses and "malware" with security and firewall software. Avoid typing your personal information when using unsecured Wi-Fi; create strong, personal passwords; and only download software and apps from trusted sources. Don't overshare personal information on social media sites and be cautious with geotagging softwares. Visit [OnGuardOnline.gov](http://www.onguardonline.gov/) (link to: <http://www.onguardonline.gov/>) for more information on how to be safe, secure and responsible online.
- **Be careful when using public computers.** Delete any personal documents and empty the Recycle Bin on the desktop before you log off. Check Internet settings

and make sure the computer is set to delete your browsing history. Never use your credit or debit card to make online purchases on public computers.

- **If you are the victim of identity theft, report it.** Close all fraudulent accounts. Call the Fraud Department of each company where an account was fraudulently opened in your name or shows purchases you did not make. Change all of your passwords. Report identity theft to your local police precinct and file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) at ftc.gov/idtheft (link to: <http://www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/feature-0014-identity-theft>) or call 1-877-ID-THEFT (1-877-438-4338). Place a fraud alert on your credit report with one of the three credit reporting agencies: Equifax, Experian, TransUnion. Keep copies of everything.

For more consumer tips, visit nyc.gov/consumers (link to: <http://www.nyc.gov/consumers>) and join the conversation on Twitter by following [@NYCDCA](https://twitter.com/nycdca) (link to: <http://www.twitter.com/nycdca>) and using the hashtags [#NCAM](https://twitter.com/search?q=%23NCSAM) (link to: <https://twitter.com/search?q=%23NCSAM>) and [#ConsumerMatters](https://twitter.com/search?q=%23ConsumerMatters) (link to: <https://twitter.com/search?q=%23consumer matters&src=typd>)