"FREE" Wi-Fi Scam Alert

If you are travelling this summer and taking advantage of free Wi-Fi hotspots, double check before connecting your laptop, tablet, or smartphone. Scammers use fake Wi-Fi hotspots to steal personal information and/or gain access to your device.

How the Scam Works:

You are at a coffee shop, airport, hotel lobby, or other public place, and you want to connect to the Wi-Fi. You search for connections and find one nearby. It may be labeled something generic like "Free Public Wi-Fi." This may look harmless, but don't connect. It is really a scam!

Some fake Wi-Fi hotspots claim to be charging a small fee to use the connection. After a user connects, they are prompted to enter credit card information. Of course, this info is shared with the scammer.

In another version, a hacker inserts him or herself between your computer and the Wi-Fi connection. Everything you do online – such as make a purchase or log into an account – is now transmitted through the scammer's computer. This means they can now access any passwords, credit card information, and other data you've entered online.

Protect Yourself from a Wi-Fi Scam:

Here are some suggestions to safely use public Wi-Fi connections:

- **Be sure you are using the correct Wi-Fi connection**: If you are in a place that offers free Wi-Fi, verify the name of the connection before joining. Scammers often set up fake hotspots next to real ones.
- **Be careful how you use public Wi-Fi**: When using a hotspot to log into an account or make a purchase, be sure the site is fully encrypted (look for "https").
- **Consider using a VPN:** If you regularly access public Wi-Fi, use a virtual private network (VPN). VPNs encrypt traffic between your computer and the internet even on unsecured networks.
- **Always use antivirus software and a firewall.** Protect your computer (and some cell phones) by using anti-virus software and a firewall from a reputable company.
- **Use good password sense:** Protect yourself from hacking by using strong passwords and creating a different password for each account.

https://www.bbb.org/council/news-events/bbb-scam-alerts/2017/07/scam-alertwatch-out-
for-free-wi-fi-scams