

# MONEYWISE

VALUING PEOPLE. VALUING MONEY.

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## THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: MONEY TRANSFER APPS

Money transfer apps are a convenient way to send money to others. Despite the benefit of convenience, there are tax implications and risks to using money transfer apps. When using these services, be careful to avoid payment mishaps and scams. Always research money transfer apps before using them to ensure that the app you choose is reputable.

### WHAT ARE MONEY TRANSFER APPS?

You may have heard of apps such as Venmo, Cash App, Zelle, or PayPal. These apps allow for person-to-person money transfers directly from your account to the recipient. Convenience is a large draw for these apps, as they make it easy to send money without having to carry cash or swipe a card. For example, you can easily repay a friend for covering your lunch if you forget your wallet, or you might pay a babysitter when you don't have cash on hand.

### TAX IMPLICATIONS

Money transfer apps often allow you to make a note of what the payment is for or indicate if a transaction is personal or for business. The app might need to report transfers related to a business expense. So, labeling transfers can keep personal transactions from being counted as income, such as a friend paying you back for dinner.



### PAYMENT MISHAPS

Have you ever sent an email or text message to the wrong person? This mistake can happen with money transfer apps too, but with your money! Only use money transfer apps for people you know well and can verify their identity.

Some apps have security measures built in to avoid paying the wrong person, such as with a recipient's phone number or email address. Always double check that the recipient is who you intend them to be before sending money. Some apps allow the recipient to send you a request for payment. Others will allow you to add friends or contacts. Consider sending a small "test" amount first, such as \$1, to ensure it goes to the correct person before sending larger sums.

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## MONEY TRANSFER APPS ARE AN EASY TARGET FOR SCAMMERS BECAUSE OF THE QUICK NATURE OF THE TRANSACTIONS



### AVOIDING SCAMS

Money transfer apps are an easy target for scammers because of the quick nature of the transactions and the difficulty of getting money back once it has been sent. Common scams include promise of product, loved one in need, and fake customer support scams.

**Promise of product** scams are when a scammer requests payment and promises a product with no intention to deliver. Promised items might include concert tickets, puppies, or other items sold on online marketplaces. Always research a seller to ensure they are reputable or wait until you have the product in hand before transferring money.

**Loved one in need** scams involve a scammer pretending to be a loved one in crisis requesting you immediately send money. These scams prey on your emotions. Always take time to verify the situation before acting. For example, if you received a message on social media, their account may have been hacked. Call your loved one before you consider transferring money.

**Fake customer support** scams can be tricky to spot. Scammers pose as representatives from a money transfer app or company. They

send emails, texts, or make phone calls that seem legitimate, but they ask for your personal information or account details. Always seek customer support directly through the app or company website, and never disclose personal information if you receive unsolicited contact.

If you suspect a scam, report it to help stop the scammer. Visit <https://reportfraud.ftc.gov/> to file a report with the Federal Trade Commission.

### REFERENCES:

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. <https://www.consumerfinance.gov/about-us/blog/helpful-tips-using-mobile-payment-services-and-avoiding-risky-mistakes/>

National Credit Union Administration. <https://mycreditunion.gov/about-credit-unions/products-services/mobile-payments-wallets/person-to-person-payment-apps>

Taxpayer Advocate Service. <https://www.taxpayeradvocate.irs.gov/news/tas-tax-tip-use-caution-when-paying-or-receiving-payments-from-friends-or-family-members-using-cash-payment-apps/>

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