ClubRunner

How do I recognize spam email?

Mickey D. - 2021-08-25 - Support

You may sometimes receive an email that you might suspect as spam, or you may doubt its message contents or the person who sent it. This article will go over how to look for warning signs for potential spam email.

1. What is the sender's email address?

This is typically the quickest and most efficient way to tell if an email is spam. It's important to distinguish the sender email address from the sender's name. For example let's say your club President is John Jones. You receive an email from John Jones - but the originating sender email address is something suspect like <atcr91313@gmail.com> or <14b_john_jones15ixneg@hotmail.com>. While the name John Jones may appear somewhere in the message, notice both these emails could have been auto-created by some spambot. In our example you find in your address book that John's email is actually <johnjones@yahoo.com>.

It's important to know that the names and even titles of your club executives/directors are relatively easy to find on club and district websites. But it's much harder to actually send from someone else's email inbox.

If you're not sure of the sender's email address - don't reply. Open a new message, send John Jones a completely separate email, ask John if he recently sent you this message.

2. What is the subject and the content of the email?

Sometimes spam emails are very easy to catch, e.g., some anonymous company asks you to click a link to purchase something. But sometimes the contents can be much more sophisticated. Remember here that public content such as a person's name or title can be copied/pasted, and if they publicly posted their address or phone number, this could be used too.

Generally there tends to be a specific writing style for spam emails. Sometimes it's a strange cordial tone such as "Dear, I really need you to read this…" and sometimes it's a sense of urgency "Please read this I need a response right away…". Most times the spammer may ask you to click some link, reply right away or both. **When in doubt - don't reply**. Send a separate email and verify with the "real" John.

It's good practice to never click any link inside an email unless you've checked the sender's email address and know it's a legitimate email.

3. Does the spam sender know your email address?

If you've determined the email is spam, there might still be chance that the spammer doesn't actually know your email address. Even if you received the spam directly, the spam sender may have used a ClubRunner anonymized "contact us" form. Here's an example of what an anonymized form looks like:
https://portal.clubrunner.ca/13844/singleemail/contactus

While you can send a message on this page notice the email address is not shown anywhere, even inside the HTML source code. All club & district executives have a "contact us" page that looks like this. If a spammer were to fill out and send an email using this type of "contact us" page, they would be able to see the name of the recipient - but not the email address.

You'll know when you received an email through this type of anonymized contact form. Look for this message in the bottom of the email:

This message has been sent to you by a visitor to your website and was sent without revealing your email address. Please note that neither the sender's email address nor the message contents have been verified.
That message means someone filled out the form. Remember they can input any first and last name (e.g., your club president's first & last name) - but we record the email address they input (it's very likely a spam email address). So as long as you don't reply *the spammer won't actually know the email address they're sending to*.

If you're unsure about any email that gets sent to you, if you don't know what to do or who to reply to, or if you're being spammed by the same person more than once - please contact our team. We're happy to verify any email for you, and if we find a true spammer's email address we'll put that email address in our internal blocked list so they can't send you email anymore.

Don't hesitate to contact our team if you have any questions.