

Fraudulent Emails (Phishing)



Scammers are taking advantage of the good nature of sisters. It is concerning to us and we want to be sure you are educated and informed.

If you receive an email from what seems to be a member of your chapter or one of your state, provincial or district (s/p/d) chapter officers, asking you to send some type of financial support (cash, gift cards, electronic gift cards), **it is likely part of a scam known as phishing.**

It is important to remember P.E.O. will never:

1. Ask for emailed lists of member information. P.E.O. already has your chapter's membership information.
2. Ask for the password to secure P.E.O. websites. If this is requested, call the sender (someone you know) to confirm they are asking for a password.
3. Ask for gift cards for project fundraising. The exception would be chapters that **may choose** to send gift cards to specific Cottey College students. Students should be known to the chapter or can be verified through Cottey.
4. Request electronic payment information in an email.

If you receive an email requesting financial support, here is what you can do to prevent being scammed:

1. Look at the email address. Compare it to your yearbook or the directory available on the P.E.O. International member website.
2. Call your chapter president or s/p/d president and ask.
3. Do not open an attachment or click on a link within the message.
4. Do not let an **“urgent message”** pressure you to respond immediately.
5. Do not reply to the message if you think it is suspicious or the offer seems too good to be true.
6. Do not fulfill the request without doing independent verification.

If you receive an email you know is fraudulent, if possible, please do the following:

1. If you are a member of a chapter, alert your local chapter president and share an example. Do not forward the email, rather take a screen shot of it and then delete the message.
2. If you are a local chapter president, alert your s/p/d president and share an example. Do not forward the email, rather take a screen shot of it and then delete the message.
3. If you are a s/p/d president, gather examples and alert the P.E.O. Executive Office and share an example. Do not forward the email, rather take a screen shot of it and attach it to a new email and send it to phishreport@peodsm.org. Delete the original message.

If there is a scam in your area, your s/p/d president will:

1. Post information on the s/p/d website.
2. Post messages on the s/p/d social media accounts.
3. Send an email to chapter presidents within the s/p/d area.
4. Alert the P.E.O. Executive Office.
5. International Chapter will log the incident and report to the U.S. Federal Trade Commission or the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre.

Steps International Chapter is taking to prevent fraud:

1. Third-party cybersecurity assessments.
2. Ensuring leadership and executive office employees receive ongoing cybersecurity training.
3. Implementing two-factor authentication for users accessing the P.E.O. network.
4. Supporting education of cybersecurity throughout the organization through The P.E.O. Record, workshops and social media posts.
5. Removing members' mailing addresses within The P.E.O. Record listings.
6. Removing unnecessary directories from the P.E.O. International member website.
7. Moving to higher security to access the P.E.O. International member website.

Here is one real example: What red flags can you find in this email that point to it being a scam?

From: <chapterpresidentaz1.p.e.o@gmail.com>
Date: January 4, 2023 at 8:35:38 AM MST
To:
Subject: Gift Runs For Cottey Students

Good Morning and have a happy New Year Dorothy! I had a wonderful Christmas experience with my family. I hope you had a fun-filled Christmas also! I'm emailing you because I need your help and I'm currently indisposed probably it's the cold. I need you to be my arms and legs to get this errand done for PEO, I've got credence in you taking care of this. The State Chapter wants to send gift cards to some cottey students that are already home for the festivities and I'm in charge of getting this done. I will need your help in getting those gift cards and sending them to me please, I have the student email address which I will forward the gift cards to rather than mailing, I have decided to make it a personal duty. I will be responsible for the money involved. I'm supposed to get this done but I can't! I would have given you a call but I presently do not have access to my mobile phone.

Unfortunately my phone is faulty, That's why I'm emailing you, till I get it back from fix, I can only be reached via email. Glad if you can help take care of this, it seems everyone is stuck with the christmas celebration and you seem to be my last hope. I will provide you with the type of gift cards and amount of each, let me know ASAP if you can get this done and get reimbursed. Please read this and let me know, Thanks!

Lovingly in P.E.O.

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PO Box
Pinedale, WY, 82941
chapterpresidentaz1.p.e.o@gmail.com

Check how you did:

1. Email address is not an accurate email. You can verify on the P.E.O. International member website or call your chapter president.
2. Language is familiar but seems a little off.
3. P.E.O. in the subject or body of the email does not have the periods.
4. Issue with the phone, requests it via email.
5. Seems desperate and urgent.

Thank you for reviewing this important information. Your caution when dealing with a potential phishing email by a scammer is greatly appreciated.