

Avoiding Scammers

Our small soaring community isn't immune to scams. While most buyers are genuine, it's not always easy to judge the legitimacy of an inquiry, especially when you're eager to make a sale. Always trust your instincts and proceed with caution if anything feels off.

Red Flags to Watch For

Here are some common signs that a potential buyer might not be legitimate:

- **Poor or awkward sentence structure**

Frequent spelling or grammar mistakes can be a red flag. That said, please remember that English may not be the first language of a legitimate buyer — use your judgment.

- **Generic or suspicious email addresses**

Scammers often use Yahoo, Hotmail, Outlook, or Gmail accounts with random letters and numbers.

- **Lack of knowledge about the item**

Be cautious if the buyer avoids specifics, asks vague questions, or clearly doesn't understand what you're selling. Start a conversation with the buyer. A genuine buyer will typically be comfortable answering specific questions and engaging in back-and-forth communication.

Here are some questions you can ask:

“Can you tell me more about what you're looking for in a glider?”

A real buyer should have a clear idea of their needs and preferences.

“Do you have any experience flying this type of aircraft?”

This helps assess whether the buyer knows what they're talking about.

“Do you have any questions about the condition, history, or specs of the glider?”

A genuine buyer **will often want** to know more than what's listed in the ad.

By starting a dialogue and staying alert for vague or evasive responses, you make it harder for scammers to succeed — and easier for legitimate buyers to connect with you.

- **Unusual payment methods or requests** – Use extreme caution if the payment arrangements feel rushed or unconventional. Asking for funds to be handled through an escrow company will usually send scammers packing.

Be cautious of buyers who quickly mention:

- “Certified Checks” or “Money Orders”
 - Third-party pickup agents
 - Paying through PayPal
- **Suspicious links**
Avoid clicking on links sent by buyers, especially if the message feels unnatural. These could be attempts to trick you into downloading malware, possibly generated by AI bots.

When in Doubt — Pause

If anything about a buyer's message feels wrong, take a step back. You're under no obligation to respond or continue the conversation. Taking the time to verify the buyer can help you avoid stress, frustration, and financial loss.