BLACK FRIDAY · 2026

The 12-point check before you tap “Buy”.

Print it. Keep it next to your phone. Two minutes, and it covers most of what goes wrong this week.

First, the rule that prevents most of it

Never sign in from a link. Not in a text, not in an email, not in a DM, not in an ad. Open the app, or type the address yourself. If a message about your account or a package needs you to click and sign in, that is the attack. There is no exception — and the message being well-written proves nothing.

SIX SIGNS THE MESSAGE IS FAKE

1. A deadline measured in hours.
“Suspended in 24 hours.” “Returns to sender tonight.” Real companies don’t run account decisions on a countdown sent by text.

2. The link goes somewhere else.
Press and hold to preview. Read the domain right to left: `amazon.com.account-check.top` is not Amazon. `amaz0n.com` is not Amazon.

3. It asks for a card to receive something.
A redelivery fee, a customs fee, a “small verification”. Carriers and retailers don’t collect card details by text.

4. It asks for a code you were just sent.
That one-time code is the last lock on the account. Anyone asking you to read it out or type it into a page is taking the account.

5. It asks you to pay with gift cards.
No legitimate refund, fee or delivery is ever settled with gift-card codes. This is the most reliable scam signal there is.

6. The details are almost right.
“Dear Customer.” A logo with the wrong spacing. A hyphen in the brand name. The domain after the @ is wrong. Small errors are the fingerprint.

TWO CHECKS ON THE SELLER

11. “Sold by” and “Ships from” are different facts.
Third-party seller shipping it themselves means you are in a dispute with a company you can’t phone. Check both lines.

12. Read the last 12 months, not the lifetime score.
A 96% rating built over eight years says nothing about October. Sort by recent; read the one-stars for “return” and “refund”.

FOUR SIGNS THE REVIEWS AREN’T REAL

7. A wall of five stars in a few days.
Sort by most recent. Ten glowing reviews in three days on a year-old listing is not demand — it’s a purchase.

8. Praise that could describe anything.
“Great product, fast shipping.” No size, no use, no detail, no small complaint. Real buyers mention what annoyed them.

9. The reviewer only writes five stars.
Tap the name. Fifty reviews, all five stars, unrelated categories: that’s an account that exists to post.

10. The photo appears in another listing.
Reverse-image-search one review photo. The same photo on a different product means nobody there owns this one.

Brushing. A package arrives you never ordered — sometimes with your name on it. Don’t review it, don’t keep it as a bonus. Someone used your address to post a “verified” review. Report the order.

The rating that jumps, then collapses. 4.1 → 4.7 in a week, then a run of one-star “it broke”. Read the one-stars, newest first, before you trust the average.

THEN CHECK THE PRICE, NOT THE BADGE

- A “40% off” badge says the price is 40% below *some* number. It doesn’t say which one, or whether anyone paid it.
- Look at the price history. A price raised last month and “cut” this week is decoration.
- Compare price **per unit**, not per pack. The bigger box is often the worse deal.
- The cart does **not** reserve stock, and the price can change before you pay.
- Decide your number before you open the app. The budget set at breakfast survives the countdown; the one invented at midnight doesn’t.

Keep for anything over $50: the order number, the date, and a screenshot of the listing as it was. If it arrives wrong, that screenshot is the difference between a refund and an argument.

IF IT ALREADY HAPPENED

You clicked and signed in
Change the password from a device you trust, typed directly. Change it everywhere you reused it. Turn on two-factor. Then call the card issuer and ask for a *replacement*, not a block.

You paid
Call the issuer and say “I want to dispute this charge as fraudulent.” This week, not next. Keep the message and the confirmation.

A package you didn’t order
Report it as unsolicited. Don’t review it. Don’t return it to an address supplied by whoever contacts you next.

Someone has your one-time code
Assume the account is going. Password, active sessions, recovery email and phone — in that order, now.

The full kit — deal-day plan, the fake-review checks, and the five refund messages — is at blackfridaysurvivalkit.com

For online shoppers. Not affiliated with, endorsed by, or sponsored by Amazon.com, Inc. “Amazon” is a trademark of Amazon.com, Inc. No savings are promised: results depend on the seller, the listing, and the return window shown on your order.