

How to Change Privacy Settings in WhatsApp: Improve Security and Safeguard Against Scams

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By Vipin PG | Published May 24, 2015 | Updated November 30, 2024 | Format: Guide | 3 min read

Quick answer

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Privacy and security go hand in hand, especially today where fraud and scams are rampant. WhatsApp provides strong privacy options that allow you to control who can access your personal information, such as your profile photo, last seen, status updates, and more. Adjusting these settings both protects your data and helps mitigate risks of fraud and scams. Follow this guide to configure your WhatsApp privacy settings and learn how to stay safe from malicious activities.

Step-by-Step Guide to Changing Privacy Settings

Step 1: Open WhatsApp Settings

1. Open your WhatsApp app.
2. Tap the three dots in the top-right corner (for Android) or the Settings tab at the bottom (for iPhone).
3. Navigate to Settings.

Step 2: Go to Privacy Options

1. In the Settings menu, tap on Account.
2. Select Privacy from the Account options.

Step 3: Configure Your Privacy Preferences

The Privacy menu includes several settings that allow you to control who can see your personal details:

1. Last Seen and Online

- Last Seen: Controls who can view your last active time on WhatsApp.
- Online Status: Decide who can see when you're actively using the app.

2. Profile Photo

- Restrict visibility of your profile picture to prevent scammers from using your photo to create fake accounts.

3. About

- Manage who can view your "About" section.

4. Status

- Share status updates only with trusted contacts.

5. Groups

- Control who can add you to groups. Scammers often use group invitations to spread malicious links or fake offers.

6. Blocked Contacts

- Block suspicious or unknown contacts who might be attempting to scam you.

7. Read Receipts

- Disable read receipts (blue ticks) to improve privacy when needed.

Additional Tips to Stay Safe from Fraud and Scams on WhatsApp

In addition to configuring privacy settings, follow these best practices to protect yourself from scams:

1. Avoid Clicking on Suspicious Links

- Be cautious of links sent via WhatsApp, even if they appear to come from a known contact. Scammers often use hacked accounts to spread phishing links.

2. Use Two-Step Verification

- Enable two-step verification for an extra layer of security:
 - Go to Settings > Account > Two-Step Verification and set a PIN.
 - This prevents unauthorized access to your account, even if your SIM card is compromised.

3. Beware of Impersonation

- Scammers may impersonate friends or family, asking for money or sensitive information. Always verify such requests by calling the person directly.

4. Be Cautious with Unknown Contacts

- If you receive messages from unknown numbers claiming to be from your bank, courier service, or government agencies, avoid responding. Verify through official channels.

5. Report and Block Suspicious Accounts

- If you suspect fraudulent activity, report the account directly to WhatsApp. To do this:
 - Open the chat > Tap the three dots > Select More > Tap Report.

6. Keep Your App Updated

- Regular updates ensure you have the latest security features and bug fixes. Enable automatic updates for convenience.

7. Disable Auto-Download for Media

- Go to Settings > Storage and Data > Media Auto-Download and set to No Media for mobile data and Wi-Fi. This prevents malicious files from being automatically saved.

Why Privacy Settings and Vigilance Are important

With the rising trend of online scams, protecting your personal information on WhatsApp is more important than ever. Fraudsters often exploit weak privacy settings to target users. By configuring privacy options and following safety measures, you can reduce your exposure to scams and enjoy a safer messaging experience.

Conclusion

By taking control of your privacy settings and adopting these best practices, you can safeguard your personal information and stay one step ahead of scammers. WhatsApp continues to improve its security features, but it's equally important to stay vigilant and exercise caution when communicating online. Take a few minutes to update your settings today, it's a small step that can make a big difference in your digital security.