

# QuickTips

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## Stay Spam-Free - Don't Fall For Cheap Gas Offers

Gas prices may have come down slightly in the past few weeks, but they're still at historic highs. And where you may see nothing but a thinner wallet and more reasons than ever to car pool, online scammers are seeing dollar signs. Some clever tricksters have come up with dubious gift cards and other Internet cons to prey on people's desire to spend less on gas. And in the process, they could be collecting valuable consumer data and reselling it to spammers. Here are a few tricks they've been using:

**Prepaid gas cards.** These cards promise that you'll be able to purchase a gas card at a fixed per-gallon price online and then use the card at your leisure. The only problem is that at least one such gas card company had no arrangement with any vendor who actually sells gas.

**Online rate locks.** Several sites run by Free Zone Media (RadioGasDeal.com, GasLockedIn.com, and GasPumpRebates.com) let you "lock in" the price of gas at \$2.49 a gallon. But you have to sign up for commercial offers first, and the \$2.49 per gallon rate only applies to up to 15 gallons of gas.

**"Free gas" sites.** Even if these sites appear to be co-branded with a reputable gas company (for example, ExxonMobileGiftCard.com), they are not. They are independent sites that require you to sign up for commercial offers or disclose a lot of personal information that could result in massive amounts of spam in the future.

For more information, check out this informative [PC World article](#).

As usual, the take-home message is this: If an online offer seems too good to be true, it probably is. It's not worth the risk of exposing your computer to dubious spammer sites rife with potential viruses and spyware, nor is it worth your time or peace of mind to give out personal information or endure floods of spam, to save some money on a gas card that you'll probably never receive anyway. Expensive gas isn't fun, but getting scammed is even worse.

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