

Hoax email delivery failures

Trading Standards Officers are warning email users to be on their guard as global spam levels spike.

A current spamming tactic appears to be the use of emails purporting to come from email system administrators. They will apparently be sent from accounts such as 'postmaster@...', 'MAILER-DAEMON@...', or from account names such as 'Mail Delivery System', 'System Administrator', 'Postmaster' or 'Mail Delivery Subsystem'.

Subject lines contain references such as, 'Returned mail:Mailbox Full', 'failure notice', 'Undeliverable Mail Returned to Sender', 'Delivery Notification (Failure)'. Some emails purport to be an 'Out of office reply'.

All of the said emails are spoof emails designed to trick the recipient into believing that they are a genuine notification. In reality the email is simply a social engineering attempt to dupe users into opening it and then clicking on embedded Internet links (URLs) within. Such links will likely point to websites containing malicious code that will attempt to exploit vulnerabilities in the computer's operating system.

Trading Standards advice is clear: always delete such emails without delay - do not be tempted to open the email out of curiosity. On no account should users click on any embedded URLs or open any attachments. Users should also ensure that their operating systems are fully patched, and that they use up-to-date antivirus and firewall software at all times.

For more advice on avoiding spam ([Avoiding Spam](#)) and general PC and Internet security, please see our other guides and Watchdog Alerts, or visit www.getsafeonline.org

All our alerts are available in a range of formats and languages, including large print. Please contact Nicola Wilson if this would be helpful to you, or to someone you know.

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