

Career Advice

Applying for jobs

## Looking for work? 5 ways to stay safe when job hunting online



Jobsdb content team – updated on 31 January, 2026

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With data breaches, scams, and fraud becoming more common, it is important to know how to stay secure when you are searching for a job online in Hong Kong's highly connected environment.

Unfortunately, some people target job seekers via text, WhatsApp and email, posing as potential employers or recruiters to try and obtain sensitive personal information or even money.

But being aware of these dangers and following a few key tips can help keep you safe while you look for your next role on major Hong Kong job boards and professional networking platforms.

Human resources consultant Nick Chow of [Macleans Group](#) provides 5 tips for securely navigating the world of online job hunting.

## 1. Share personal information through safe platforms, not your resume

If you need to share personal information during a job search, use secure platforms like SEEK Pass to ensure your private data is protected. For most applications, it is not necessary to share sensitive documents in your resume or via email.

[SEEK Pass](#) offers a safer way to share proof of your credentials without giving access to the original documents. You can verify your identity, qualifications, and work rights directly within your profile, then share the verified results. This gives employers confidence while keeping your sensitive documents private.

“Things like your blood type, sensitive medical details, details of your family situation, criminal history – I have seen them all on resumes,” says Chow. You do not know what the company’s practices are for storing data, so do not take the risk. If you are unsure, you can check Hong Kong’s official guidance from the [Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data \(PCPD\)](#) on what constitutes personal data and how it should be handled.

To use [SEEK Pass](#), log in to your [JobsDB profile](#), navigate to the [verification section](#), and follow the prompts to verify your identity, qualifications and credentials. You only need to complete this process once and use it across all current and future job applications.

## **2. Verify email addresses and links**

When you communicate with recruiters or potential employers online, always be cautious of the email address they use, and any links they send. Chow says that if something seems not quite right with the grammar or formatting of an email address, it should be a red flag.

“If you are in doubt about a link or email sent to you, call the company using the phone number listed on their official website or public company directory,” he says. Ask to be put through to the person emailing you so you can independently verify that everything is above board. This way you can confirm the authenticity of both the email address and the link, and avoid phishing emails or fake career pages.

## **3. Look at whether the job comes from a reliable source (and how real it sounds)**

The platform on which a job is posted can be a clear indicator of how trustworthy it is. If you only see a job advertised on social media, messaging apps, or in closed chat groups, be wary. Ask yourself why these jobs would not be posted on a regular job search site, the company’s own careers page, or a well-known Hong Kong recruitment agency website instead.

This is especially the case for jobs that sound too good to be true, Chow warns. “Someone posting on Instagram for a work-from-home data entry role that pays the equivalent of thousands of Hong Kong dollars a week, or requesting you leave reviews for a product online in exchange for large amounts of gift cards, is very

likely dishonest.”

## 4. If you are feeling worried, listen to your gut

If you are concerned, Chow advises you ask yourself the following questions:

**“Do they need to know this to progress my application?”**

They might need your contact details when you first apply, but they do not need something like your Hong Kong Identity Card copy or proof of right to work until you are being formally onboarded.

**“Could I provide this information in a safer way?”**

There are specially designed services and corporate systems that job seekers can use to securely prove to employers that they have work rights or a licence. Options like this can also make the process simpler for the employer, because they receive verified information rather than loose email attachments.

## 5. Do not be afraid to ask questions

Whether you have cause for concern or just want to be thorough, it is always well within your rights to ask questions of the recruiter or company that is hiring.

“A legitimate company should be able to explain why they need information and how they protect it,” Chow advises. “Raising these questions shows that you are diligent and sensible online to the employer.” In Hong Kong’s professional culture, being careful with data and digital security is generally seen as a sign of maturity and professionalism, not trouble-making.

## Cheat sheet for what is safe to share and what is not

As well as the above tips, Chow provides a quick cheat sheet for knowing what information you can safely provide, and what you should be cautious of:

The following details are generally safe to share once you are dealing with a legitimate employer or recruitment platform and, where possible, have used some form of verification tool to add an extra layer of security:

- Job history
- Current location (district or region will suffice)
- Contact details
- Confirmation of licences or professional registrations (for example, confirming

you are a registered professional in your field)

## **Risky (unless they are onboarding you as an employee or contractor):**

- Bank details (for salary payment, which should only be requested at contract or onboarding stage)
- Tax identification numbers used in Hong Kong or elsewhere
- Scans/photos of identity documents such as your Hong Kong Identity Card or passport

## **Massive red flag:**

- Asking for money for “pre-employment checks”, “training fees” or “admin charges”
- Telling you to buy your own work laptop or equipment from a specific supplier before you have any signed contract, especially if they promise to reimburse you later

It is important to take care when putting yourself out there online in your job search. Protect yourself by being alert for fraudulent job ads, suspicious links and email addresses, and by listening to your intuition, so that your online job search in Hong Kong stays both productive and safe.