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Turn On Advanced Protection & Scam Detection

Google's strongest safety switch and the phone's built-in scam warnings — in plain English

Plain-English Android help from:

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SUMMARY

The 60-Second Version

Android has two strong, free safety features. Advanced Protection is a single switch — search for it in Settings and turn on "Device protection" — that turns on Google's strongest security together, including keeping the app scanner on and blocking apps from outside the Play Store. Scam Detection, set inside the Phone and Messages apps, warns you about likely scam calls and texts right on the phone, with no conversation sent away.

Confirm Google Play Protect is scanning your apps, set a screen lock, and turn on automatic updates. Availability varies by phone and country. The one habit that beats every scam: anyone urgent about money or codes out of the blue is a scammer — hang up and check.

1 The Short Version

Google has built some genuinely powerful safety features into Android, and two of them are worth knowing about. The first is Advanced Protection — a single switch that turns on Google's strongest security settings all at once, ideal if you worry about scams, theft, or being targeted. The second is Scam Detection, which uses the phone itself to warn you about likely scam phone calls and text messages as they arrive.

This guide explains what each one does in plain English, who should turn it on, and exactly how. None of it costs anything, none of it reads your private messages to send them away for inspection, and you can turn any of it off again. The aim is simply to put the phone's best defenses on your side.

- Advanced Protection is one switch that turns on Google's strongest security all at once.
- Scam Detection warns you about likely scam calls and texts on the phone itself.
- Both are free, and the scam warnings run on your phone, not on a distant computer.

- Availability depends on your phone model, Android version, and country.

WATCH OUT

If you only do one thing, set a screen lock (a PIN, pattern, or fingerprint) and turn on Scam Detection. Those two steps alone block a huge share of the trouble that reaches older adults.

2 A Note on What Your Phone Can Do

These features are newer, and not every phone has every one of them yet. They depend on your phone's maker, how new it is, which version of Android it runs, and even which country you're in. So as you go, treat the menu names here as a close guide rather than an exact map — if a wording differs slightly on your phone, the feature is usually nearby under a similar name.

GOOD TO KNOW

Advanced Protection as a single switch arrived on phones running Android 16 and newer. Scam Detection for calls and texts started on newer Google Pixel phones and is spreading to other makers. If you don't see one of these, your phone may not have it yet — that's not a fault, and the individual protections in this guide are still worth turning on.

WATCH OUT

If you're not sure what your phone supports, that's a perfect thing to sort out together on a visit. I'll turn on every protection your particular phone offers and skip the ones it doesn't, so you get the full benefit without second-guessing.

3 What Advanced Protection Actually Does

Advanced Protection is best thought of as a "strongest safety" switch. Instead of hunting through a dozen separate settings, you flip one, and Google turns on its most protective options together and keeps them on. It's designed for people who want the highest level of safety and are willing to accept a few small trade-offs for it.

- It keeps Google Play Protect (the built-in app scanner) on and stops it being switched off.
- It blocks installing apps from outside the official Play Store, closing a common scam route.
- It strengthens protections if your phone is lost or stolen.
- It turns off older, less-secure 2G network connections that scammers can exploit.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> Because it bundles these together, Advanced Protection is especially reassuring for someone who doesn't want to manage lots of settings. You turn it on once and the phone keeps the strongest guard up for you.

4 Who Should Turn On Advanced Protection

Advanced Protection suits most everyday phone owners well, and it's especially worth it if any of these describe you. The trade-offs are minor for ordinary use.

- You mainly use well-known apps from the Play Store (almost everyone).
- You worry about scams, fraud, or someone getting into your phone.
- You'd rather have strong protection on automatically than manage settings yourself.
- You've been targeted before, or help manage money or family matters on the phone.

WATCH OUT

The one real trade-off: while it's on, you can't install apps from outside the official Play Store ("sideloading"). For nearly everyone that's a feature, not a loss — it blocks a favorite scammer trick. But if you rely on a special app that doesn't come from the Play Store, mention that before turning it on.

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5 How to Turn On Advanced Protection

You'll need a screen lock set first — a PIN, pattern, or fingerprint — because strong protection starts with a locked front door. Then it's just a few taps.

1. Open Settings.
2. Look for "Advanced Protection" — usually under "Security & privacy" or "Personal & device safety" (you can also search "Advanced Protection" in Settings).
3. Turn on "Device protection," then tap "Turn on" to confirm.
4. If it offers an optional "Intrusion Logging," you can turn it on or skip it — either is fine.
5. If asked, let the phone restart to finish.

TIP

If you can't find it, pull down from the top of the screen and tap the little magnifying glass or open Settings and use its search box; type "Advanced Protection." Search is the quickest way to reach any setting whose exact location differs on your phone.

6 What Scam Detection Does for Phone Calls

Scam Detection for calls listens, on the phone itself, for the tell-tale patterns of a scam — the pressure, the threats, the "move your money to keep it safe" script — and warns you mid-call with an on-screen alert and a buzz. It doesn't tell you who to trust; it flags the conversation patterns that fraudsters use, giving you a moment to pause.

- It works during the call and alerts you if the conversation looks like a known scam.
- The listening happens on your phone — the conversation isn't sent away to be recorded.
- It's there to give you a beat to think, not to decide for you.
- You can turn it off at any time, including for a single call.

GOOD TO KNOW

This is aimed squarely at the scams that hurt older adults most — the fake "bank security," "grandchild in trouble," and "your computer is infected" calls. A gentle on-screen nudge at the right moment is often all it takes to break the spell.

7 What Scam Detection Does for Text Messages

In the Messages app, Scam Detection watches for the patterns of scam texts — fake delivery notices, "wrong number" chats that warm you up before asking for money, bogus toll or tax bills — and flags them so you don't take the bait. Like the call version, the checking happens on your phone.

- Suspicious texts get flagged or filtered so they stand out as risky.
- It targets common frauds, including the slow "friendly stranger" scams.
- Known spam senders are also filtered out of your main inbox.
- A newer, optional "enhanced" mode can add extra checking for messages from strangers.

WATCH OUT

No scam filter catches everything, so treat a flag as a strong warning and the absence of a flag as no guarantee. The golden rule still rules: if a message pressures you to pay, move money, or share a code, stop and check with someone you trust.

8 How to Turn On Scam Detection

Scam Detection lives inside the Phone app and the Messages app rather than the main Settings, because each app does its own watching. The steps are short.

1. For calls: open the Phone app, tap the three dots or your profile in the corner, open Settings, and look for "Scam Detection" or "Spam and call screen." Turn it on.
2. For texts: open the Messages app, tap your profile or the three dots, open "Spam protection" or "Scam detection," and turn it on.
3. If offered a stronger or "enhanced" protection mode for messages from unknown senders, you can turn it on for extra safety.

GOOD TO KNOW

These settings may be on by default on a newer phone, or may not appear at all on an older one. If you don't find them, your phone may not offer them yet — the manual caution of not acting on pressure still protects you completely.

9 Google Play Protect: Your Built-In App Guard

Separate from the above, every Android phone comes with Google Play Protect, which quietly scans your apps for anything harmful and can warn you if an installed app starts misbehaving. It's on by default, and it's worth a look to confirm it's running.

1. Open the Play Store and tap your profile picture in the corner.
2. Tap "Play Protect."
3. Tap "Scan" to check your apps now, and make sure scanning is turned on in its settings (the gear icon).

TIP

If Play Protect ever flags an app as harmful, take it seriously and remove that app. This is the one "your phone found a problem" message that's real — unlike the fake pop-ups in a browser, which are scams.

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10

The Settings That Matter Even Without These Features

Whether or not your phone has the newest features, a short checklist of basic safety settings protects you enormously. These are available on essentially every Android phone.

- Set a screen lock: a PIN, pattern, or fingerprint. This is the foundation of everything.
- Turn on automatic updates for the system and for apps.
- Review app permissions in Settings Security & privacy Permissions; revoke anything that doesn't need your location, microphone, or camera.
- Turn on "Find My Device" so you can locate or lock the phone if it's lost.

GOOD TO KNOW

A screen lock plus automatic updates covers the overwhelming majority of real risk. The fancier features are a bonus on top — the basics do the heavy lifting.

11 What These Features Can't Do

It's important to be honest: no setting makes a phone scam-proof. These tools tilt the odds strongly in your favor, but the last line of defense is always a calm pause before acting on anything that pressures you.

WATCH OUT

No feature will stop you if a convincing stranger talks you into reading a code aloud, moving money, or installing a "helper" app during a call. The only reliable defense there is the habit: anyone who contacts you out of the blue and creates urgency about money or codes is a scammer, full stop. Hang up and check.

> *Technology narrows the risk. A calm pause closes it.*

12 A Five-Minute Safety Checkup You Can Do Today

Whatever features your phone has, here's a short checkup that puts your defenses in good order. Do it once, and you've covered the ground that matters most.

1. Confirm you have a screen lock — a PIN, pattern, or fingerprint.
2. Settings System Software update: install anything waiting.
3. Play Store profile Play Protect: tap Scan and confirm it's on.
4. Turn on scam filtering in the Phone and Messages apps.
5. Settings turn on "Find My Device" so a lost phone can be located and locked.
6. Turn on Advanced Protection if your phone offers it.

TIP

Run this checkup, then write the date on a card. Repeating it twice a year keeps your phone's defenses current as features improve — and takes only a few minutes each time.

13 Helping a Family Member Set This Up

Many people set these protections up not just for themselves but for a parent or spouse. A few thoughts make that go smoothly and kindly.

- Do it together, explaining each step — understanding beats being managed.
- Turn on scam call and text filtering, which quietly does the most good day to day.
- Make sure they know their own screen-lock PIN and Google password, written on paper at home.
- Set "Find My Device" and know how to use it if the phone goes missing.
- Above all, teach the one habit: no real company calls out of the blue asking you to act on your phone.

WATCH OUT

Setting a loved one's phone up for safety is something I do often, and I'm glad to do it with both of you present so nobody feels talked down to. The goal is confidence, not dependence — a phone they can use freely, knowing the guardrails are there.

14 When to Call Bill

Turning these protections on is straightforward, and this guide gets most people there. The reason to call is usually to make sure nothing's been missed — that every protection your particular phone offers is switched on, the basics are solid, and the settings all make sense to you.

I make house calls across Portage County. I'll go through your phone with you, turn on every safety feature it has, set a sensible screen lock and backups, and show you the one habit that stops scams cold — so you can use your phone with real peace of mind.

- You're not sure which features your phone supports, or can't find them.
- You want every protection turned on properly in one sitting.

- You got a call, text, or pop-up that worried you and want it checked.
- You'd like the basics — screen lock, updates, Find My Device — set up right.
- You simply want reassurance your phone is as safe as it can be.

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

Keep this handy. Turn on the protections, but keep the golden rule.

I want to...	Do this...
Turn on the strong switch	Settings search "Advanced Protection" turn on Device protection
Warn me about scam calls	Phone app menu Settings Scam Detection / Spam turn on
Warn me about scam texts	Messages app menu Spam protection / Scam detection turn on
Check my app guard	Play Store profile Play Protect Scan
Cover the basics	Set a screen lock; turn on auto-updates and Find My Device
Beat every scam	Anyone urgent about money or codes, out of the blue = hang up and check
Get help	Call Bill: (330) 200-8042

BEFORE YOU GO

A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill. I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results.

HOW I CAN HELP

Your Visit — and My Promise

You don't have to remember all of it — just that a friendly, patient person is one call away, whenever you'd rather have a hand.

KEY SPECS

In your home — $99 flat for the first visit, no contracts and no surprises, with a 30-day come-back-free follow-up. In-home visits cover Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities.
Outside the area? Remotely — $49 for a screen-share session (free for Support Plan members, $39/mo), refundable if I can't fix it — and credited toward a visit if you'd rather have me in person. Book either at billshometech.com/book.

GOOD TO KNOW

My promise — If you're not 100% satisfied with your visit, I'll come back at no charge, or refund the full $99. No questions, no awkwardness. That's how I'd want to be treated.

Whenever you're ready, I'll come to your home anywhere in Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities, at your pace. Too far for a house call? I also help remotely. Book at billshometech.com/book or call (330) 200-8042. — Bill

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