



Fraud Awareness Campaign for the Travel industry

The **F**raud **A**wareness **C**ampaign for the **T**ravel industry (FACT) is an outreach and education initiative of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) that provides information to users of IATA products and services (e.g. airlines, agents, other companies and individuals) so that they may avoid becoming a victim of email fraud. Please read this information carefully and share it with your colleagues.

(use the icons below to navigate)



Read about email fraud techniques



Read a fraudulent email



Recognize a fraudulent email



Report a possible fraud



Learn how to protect your company

If you have any questions concerning this message, kindly e-mail your queries to:
information.security@iata.org



Read about email fraud techniques

Many types of fraud exist, and email is an inexpensive and popular method for distributing fraudulent messages to potential victims.

Some of the most common fraudulent messages are non-monetary hoaxes or non-monetary chain mail. Treat these as you would any other spam. However, if you receive an email message that appears to involve payments, or asks for personal information, do not respond.

Recent attempts have been made to obtain payments from users of IATA products and services. The most common technique is through the use of fraudulent emails.

The methods employed generally include elements of the following:

1. **the fraudster contacts users under a false name**, sometimes similar or identical to the names of IATA officials, seeking payment for products or services and/or claiming payments for outstanding amounts due;
2. **the fraudster uses an e-mail address resembling IATA** e-mail addresses but using different host servers such as “gmail”;
3. **the fraudster uses a technique which allows the name of the sender of an e-mail to be doctored and masked**, so that the e-mail appears to have been sent from a valid IATA address;
4. **the fraudster e-mails use forged documents** bearing the official IATA logo, most likely copied from our website.

The latest attempts are presented **to appear as though they originate from an '@iata.org' address**, although this is simply a mask and the address is not valid. In such cases, the fraudster asks the recipient to reply to another email address, such as a gmail one.

Regarding the IATA names in the email signatures, in most cases details have most likely been obtained when recipients of the first email have provided copies of correspondence with IATA. **In some cases, the phone numbers have been changed to invalid numbers**, a tactic most likely designed to prevent the recipient from contacting the 'sender by phone'.



Typically, the first contact is a generic email designed to elicit a response from the recipient. If the recipient engages with the fraudsters, they then provide a more detailed request, using language most likely copied from our website.

Sometimes, this is accompanied by a fraudulent invoice. The invoice appears at times to be based on a genuine IATA or Strategic Partner invoice. They have been able to make these to look reasonably authentic as some recipients of the first email have queried the existence of outstanding amounts and provided the fraudsters with a copy of a genuine invoice that had already been paid, thereby providing the fraudsters with an appropriate invoice style and content. Fraudulent invoices have included charges relating to IATA Ground Handling Council membership fees, designator fees, and prefix code retainer/administration fees.

The fraudsters indicate that new payment arrangements are in force and that the payment requested (or simply future payments where the approach is generic in style) should be made to a new bank account.

To add authenticity to the advice of the new banking details, a “Letter of Authorization”, “Notification Letter”, or ‘Important Notice” is sometimes provided. These advices display varying styles, but all have the IATA logo present. These are likely to have been obtained from documentation on the internet, or from copies of documentation provided to the fraudsters by recipients of the fraudsters’ emails, when responding with queries.





Recognize a fraudulent email

IATA has taken a number of **steps in response to fraudulent email attempts** that have been reported to us. The following is information that you should **share with colleagues** in your company's administrative services who are responsible for settling IATA invoices.

1. **All authentic** IATA Invoices are on IATA letterhead and specify either an **IATA bank account** into which the settlement payment must be made or specify that the settlement must be through the **IATA Clearing House**.
2. As of July 19, 2010 all **authentic payment requests** or reminders from IATA are either through an **e-mail with a Digital Signature** attached to verify the authenticity of the sender, or through a letter on an **IATA letterhead**.
3. An authentic IATA Invoice or an IATA **payment reminder will never** request settlement payment into a non-IATA bank account.

In addition, the items below illustrate some of the e-mail components that will help you identify an authentic message coming from IATA.

1. All bona fide IATA e-mails use the '@iata.org' domain. It is the **only** domain permitted for the purpose of conducting IATA business.
2. Every out-going email from '@iata.org' has a digital signature with a certificate issued by Global Sign, a "trusted certificate authority". You can use the digital signature to verify the authenticity of the e-mail and that it is from IATA.
3. Accordingly, every bona fide payment request or reminder that is sent by IATA through e-mail will be transmitted using the domain '@iata.org' and will carry a digital signature.



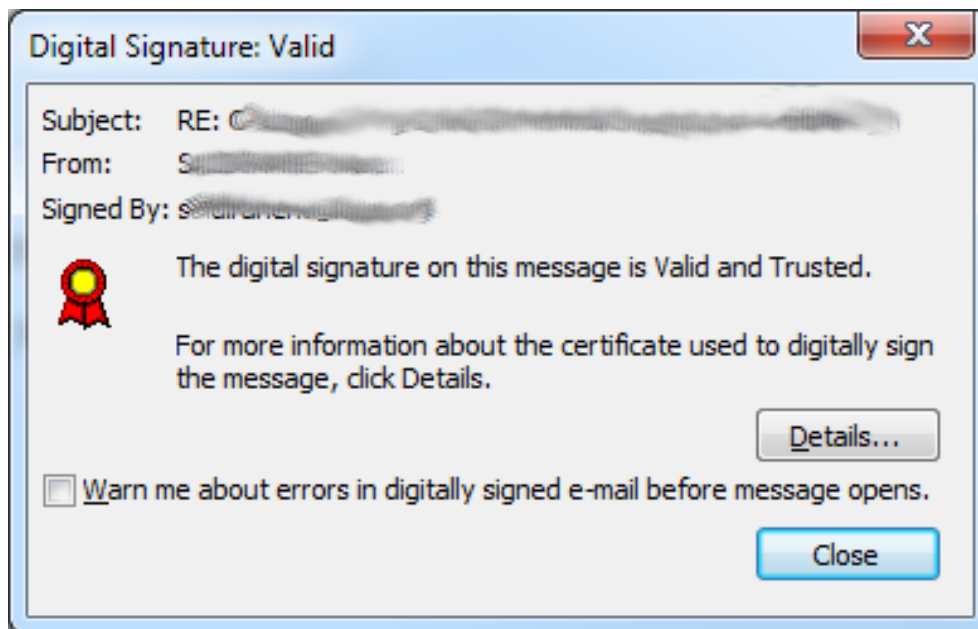
Digital Signatures

The following **guideline on how to use the digital signature** and verify the authenticity of the sender provides examples of IATA email messages signed with a digital certificate for: A) Outlook users; B) Lotus Note users; and C) Apple Mac users.

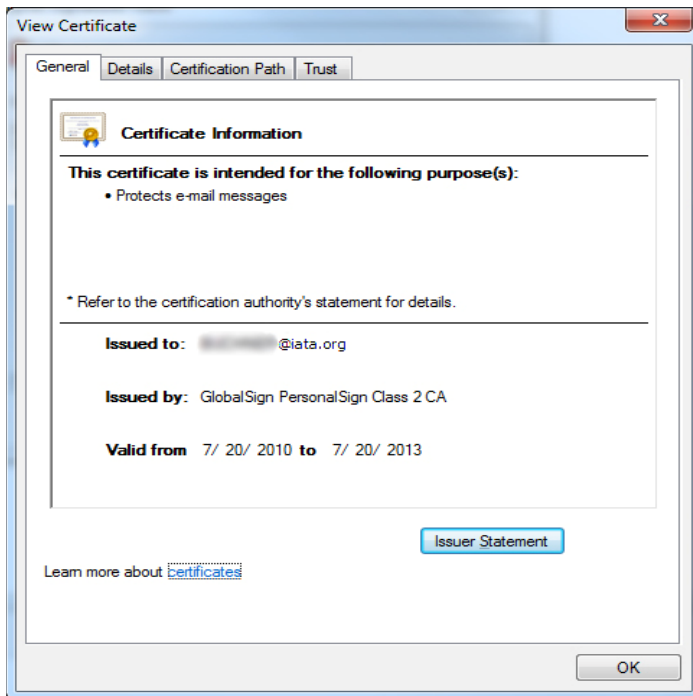
Users of free web mail providers (such as Gmail, Hotmail and Yahoo) **do not support the S/MIME standard**. Therefore, users of these email providers cannot validate the authenticity of a digital certificate and as a direct consequence, cannot validate the authenticity of email messages. Users of such free web mail services should contact IATA on information.security@iata.org if they have received a suspicious email – to report the incident or to verify its authenticity, as applicable.

A. Example for Outlook users

Every email received from IATA ('@iata.org') will have a small icon. By clicking on this icon, the recipient will see the following pop-up, which includes the name of the sender:

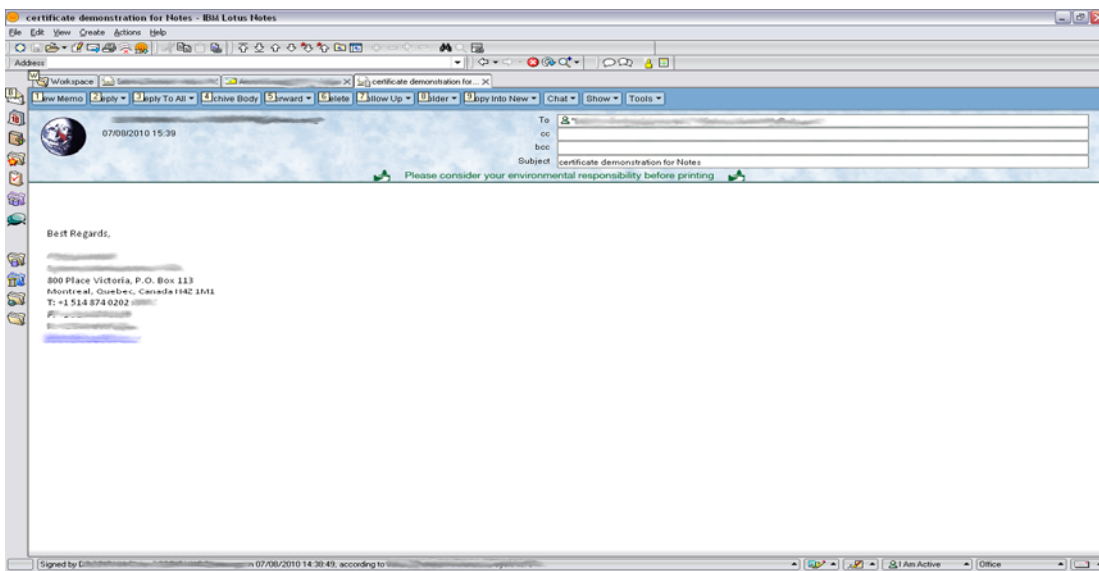


By clicking on details/view details/view certificate, the recipient will be able to see that the certificate was issued by a “trusted certificate authority” - Global Sign in IATA’s case - and check the validity of the certificate.



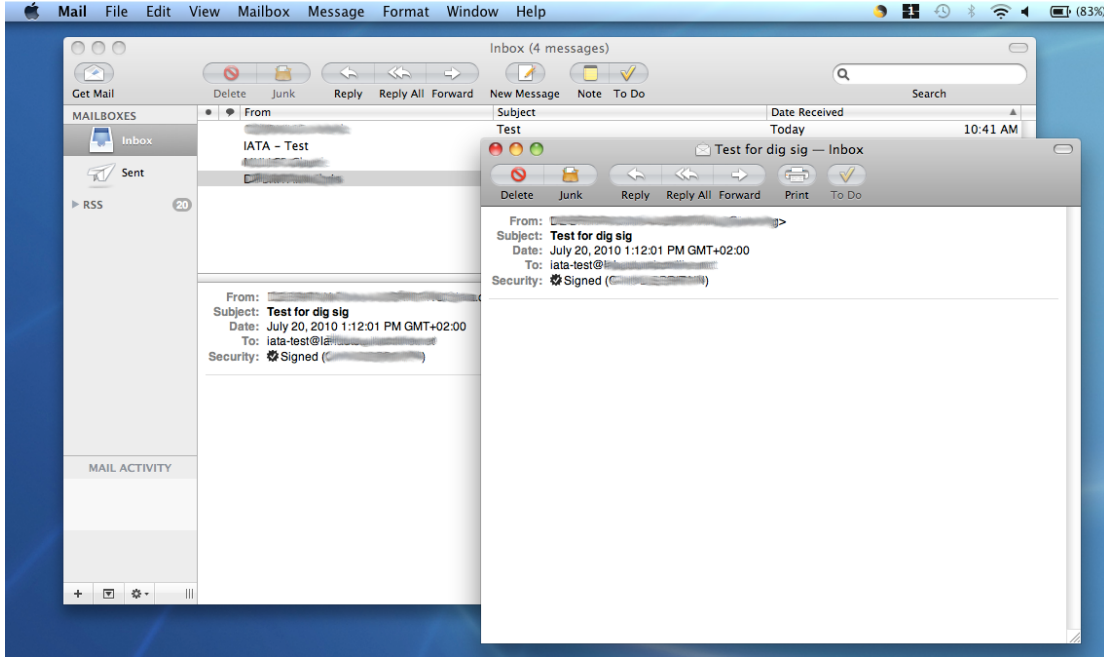
B. Example for Lotus Notes

For Lotus Notes, the digital signature is located on the bottom left hand portion of the email message:

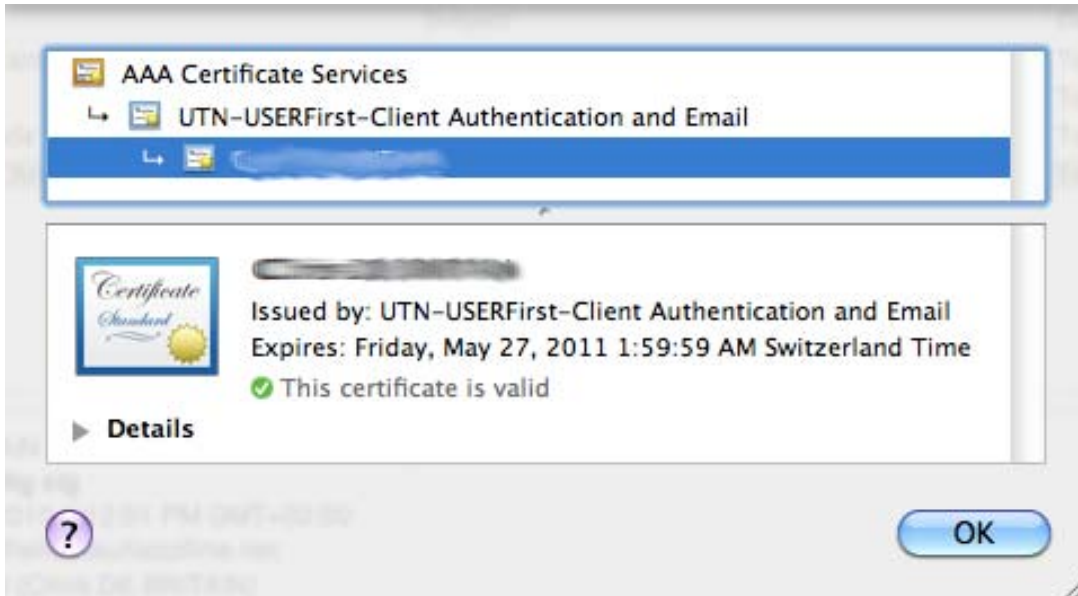


C. Example for Apple Mac

On the Apple Mac, the Mail application supports digital signatures. The digital signature is part of the message header, as the security attribute – see below:



When clicking on this security attribute, the user gets access to more in-depth information on the digital signature, including its validity status, and its expiry date.





Read a fraudulent email

Being able to recognize such e-mails can help prevent you from becoming a victim. Here are examples of some recent e-mails received by users of IATA products and services.

Example No. 1

----- Original Message -----

From: [Account Department](#)

[mailto:admin@iataaccounts.org]

Sent: Sunday, June 20, 2010 3:47 AM

Subject: IATA PAYMENT

Fraudsters have opened domains mimicking IATA e-mail addresses. They are also now spoofing our legitimate .org addresses. However, they still use addresses opened with free internet service providers.

Attn: Sirs,

Fraudulent e-mails often begin with a generic greeting such as "Attn: Sirs" or "Dear Client" rather than addressing you by name.

Your company is indebted to us in the area of International Air Transport Association for flights operated in our airspace amount 120,433.12Euros.

We have stopped using our old Bank due to their delay in receiving our payment so we advice as soon as you update us on our invoices for payment.

Some e-mails will refer to a "problem" with the bank or your account and urge you to make payments to new account. We will never notify you of a problem through an unsolicited e-mail.

*Kindly take note of our new account details and please update your file.
We advice you update us now to enable us resolve this payment asap.*

*Brgds,
Giovanni Bisignani
Director General & CEO*

There is often a sense of urgency in the e-mail encouraging you to respond immediately and to update your records with a new address, contact name, or bank account.



Example No. 2

The mail does not include a digital signature with a certificate issued by Global Sign.

----- Original Message -----

From: [International Air Transport Association](mailto:internationalair.iatatransport@gmail.com)

[mailto:internationalair.iatatransport@gmail.com]

Sent: Wednesday, February 10, 2010 17:37

To: undisclosed-recipients

Subject: From International Air Transport Association

Fraudsters use an email account such as gmail that is not "@iata.org" domain.

Dear Sir,

Your company is debted to us (IATA) check your record file and also kindly renew your membership with us IATA Ground Handling Council membership or we will remove your company name from IATA Ground Handling Council membership.

We look forward to read from you soon.

Regards,

Paul Adams

Accountant

International Air Transport Association





Report a possible fraud

If you receive a suspicious or potentially fraudulent e-mail, please report the relevant information to the following e-mail address: information.security@iata.org.

When reporting such messages, it is important to copy and paste the entire email, including the header information.

To display full message headers:

Open the mail message.

- In Outlook 2007: double-click the message so that it opens in its own window. In the Options group, click the dialog box launcher (small square with an arrow).
- In Outlook 2003: from the View menu, select Options. The message headers are at the bottom of the window, in a box labeled "Headers:" or "Internet headers:"

To insert the headers into an e-mail message:

Select all the headers by clicking and dragging the cursor from the top left corner to the bottom right corner of the header text. Press Ctrl-c to copy the headers to the Clipboard. Create a new e-mail message, click in its main text window, and press Ctrl-v to paste the headers.

Transmit the e-mail to information.security@iata.org.

If you believe you are a victim of e-mail fraud attempt, we recommend that you also contact your local law enforcement authority immediately.





Learn how to protect your company

All organizations are vulnerable to fraud, especially if elements of the following apply:

1. **Belief that fraud doesn't affect your organization.** In truth, businesses around the world lose millions each year to frauds that are specifically designed to make them victims. Many organizations aren't even aware that they have fallen victim to fraud.
2. **Organization does not have set procedures in place** to authorize purchases, pay invoices and review expenditures.
3. **Personnel are distracted** when they pay invoices such that fraudulent emails and invoices escape their notice.
4. **Personnel do not have time to verify** the source of the email requesting payment. To resolve the matter, the invoice is paid out of convenience without further investigation.
5. **Organization experiences regular staffing changes** related to high turnover, part-time or volunteer staff which increases the risk of falling victim to a fraud.
6. **Personnel recognize the name** and logo of IATA from having paid similar invoices in the past. As a result, they might not review transactions or invoice details before making a payment.
7. **Organization does not report the fraud** because personnel are either embarrassed or ashamed. Law enforcement agencies depend on organizations that have fallen victim to come forward and report fraudulent activity.





Learn how to protect your company

Learn how to avoid fraud by reading stories of recent victims. The following are based on real individuals who have been targeted by fraudsters. To protect individual privacy, the names of people and companies have been omitted.

Example 1: Fraudulent invoice

Company A received an email from a gmail email address, but apparently from IATA's Director General and CEO, advising them that they were indebted to IATA. It stated that, if they failed to take action, IATA's 'international debt collectors' would visit the company.

The company did not consider the email to be suspicious, even though it was not addressed to them specifically (it had been sent to the Operations Manager's email address listed on the company's website), the language used was threatening, it came from a "gmail" address, and was apparently from the CEO of IATA.

Company A was coincidentally about to renew their membership of the IATA Ground Handling Council (IGHC) and responded to the fraudsters, asking if it related to that. The fraudsters confirmed that it did and sent the company an invoice. The invoice bore the IATA logo (most likely obtained from the internet). The email from the fraudsters referred to a change in bank account and asked the company to make the payment to the account detailed on the invoice. This bank account was in Cyprus.

The company made the payment to the fraudsters' bank account.

When the company received a reminder from IATA about their outstanding IGHC renewal fees, they realized that they had been defrauded.

Example 2: Change in banking details

Company B received an email from someone who described themselves as a 'Customer Services Representative' informing them that they were indebted to IATA. It stated that, if they failed to take action, IATA's 'international debt collectors' would visit the company.



The email appeared to come from an '@iata.org' email address, but it asked the recipient to respond to another email address because IATA was experiencing problems with its '@iata.org' addresses.

The company did not consider the email to be suspicious, even though it was not addressed to them specifically (it had been sent via the contact us' link on the company's website), the language used was threatening, and it asked for a response to be sent to a non-'@iata.org' email address.

They did not think that they were in debt to IATA, so they responded to the fraudsters, asking for more information.

The fraudsters replied acknowledging that the company was not in fact in debt to IATA, and requested the company to inform them when their next payment was due, as IATA's banking details had changed, due to 'problems with the bank'. The fraudsters said that they would then send the company new banking details.

When the time came to make the next payment, the company notified the fraudsters, who provided account details for IATA's 'subsidiary' to whom payment was to be made.

The company subsequently made their next payment to the fraudster's bank account and did not question the fact that the new account was in a completely unrelated name, and based in China.

IATA's Accounts Receivable department contacted the company in due course to enquire about the payment of their now outstanding debt. The company informed IATA that they had already made the payment to the new bank account 'as requested', and provided confirmation of their payment. At this point, the company realized that they had been defrauded.





Learn how to protect your company

Here are other **things you can do today** to protect your organization from email fraud:

1. **Don't judge reliability** by look and content. Email messages can come from many sources and with the help of today's technology a fraudster can make an email and invoices appear to be coming from a reputable source.
2. **Review all invoices** and charges regularly.
3. **Be wary of requests** to "update" bank account information or to pay overdue invoices as you may be providing criminals with the information they need to gain access to others in your organization or to defraud third parties.
4. **Assign a limited number** of employees to make purchases. Make sure that employees with financial signing authority understand what responsibilities are tied to signing their names on invoices and purchase orders.
5. **Ensure that your systems** allow you to read emails that are protected through digital signatures.
6. **Talk to your staff and colleagues about fraud.** Decide how your organization will handle situations involving employees coming forward to report losses.

