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WhatsApp, owned by Meta (formerly Facebook, Inc.), is one of the world's most popular messaging apps. Over two billion people use the app, and collectively users send millions of messages each day. WhatsApp is a private messaging service that uses end-to-end encryption - this means that only you and the person you are texting can read the messages.

TIPS TO STAY SAFE

With over two billion users, the platform has become an obvious target for cybercriminals. Here are some tips to stay safe:

- Only download the apps for your phone from **authorized stores** (App Store on iOS and Google Play on Android).
- If you are downloading the app on your computer, use the **WhatsApp Web official version**.
- According to WhatsApp, once a user's messages are delivered, they are **deleted** from WhatsApp servers. This includes chats, photos, videos, voice messages, and files. Messages can still be stored on each individual's device and need to be backed up. Ensure you keep any and all messages related to a scam or attempted scam.
- WhatsApp **fraud** is when a scammer pretends to be a victim's friend or family then asks them for financial help. Usually the criminals state they have an emergency and need urgent financial help. Typically the scammers pretend to be in a hurry and need **immediate** help. Always call from your phone, not on the app, and confirm the situation with your friend or family member. Always get verbal confirmation from a different platform.
- If the scammer doesn't want to have a **phone call** then don't give them anything.
- **Never** give your verification code to anyone. Criminals can use this to gain access to your account then scam your friends and family. This is called WhatsApp hijacking.

TELL-TALE SIGNS OF WHATSAPP SCAMS:

- The scammer conveys a sense of urgency and tries to convince you or pressures you to pay quickly (this is almost always the case).
- The cybercriminal sends you a message from an unknown number (only occurs if the criminal has not hijacked someone's WhatsApp account).
- The scammer informs you that their number has changed and almost immediately starts talking about money (once again, this only occurs if the criminal has not hijacked someone's WhatsApp account).
- The fraudster's messages are written in poor English, as often the fraudster's native language is not English or they are not well educated.
- The criminal does not want to be called, they won't pick up the phone.
- The fraudster asks you to transfer money to an unknown account or uses an app that does not show account numbers at all (such as PayPal or Venmo).

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FRAUD? What to look for or do to ensure it is not a WhatsApp fraud connection.

- **New number?** If you receive a message from someone who is asking for money, first check whether the number is correct. If one of your friends or family suddenly has a new number and asks you for money, you should find this very suspicious. Pause for a moment and check out the language and communication style of the message. Does it sound different? If so, there is a fair chance you are dealing with a WhatsApp scam.
- **Call them!** Try to call the number of the person asking for money. If it is a scammer, they won't likely answer. If they are saying they are someone you know, call them from your regular phone, not in the WhatsApp.
- **Be calm.** Don't let the scammer pressure you. Think logically and keep calm.
- **Confirm Identity.** If you are suspicious, ask the scammer a question only your friend or acquaintance would know the answer to.
- **Secure your voicemail.** Use a unique and unpredictable code that only you would know.
- Treat your verification code like your SSN. If someone asks you to send a verification code, never send it without question.
- Set up **"2-Factor Authentication."** Once this is setup, if installing WhatsApp on a new device, WhatsApp will request the 6- digit code you have set as well as the verification they send you. This will make account hijacking much more difficult to achieve.

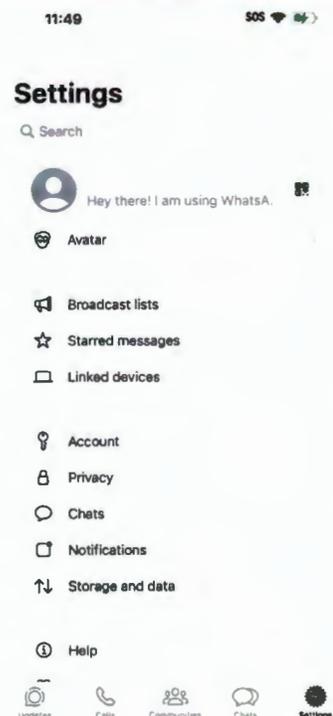
MANAGING YOUR WHATSAPP ACCOUNT

Your WhatsApp account information can be public. Manage and edit your account to display and share minimal information about yourself.

Follow the steps below to ensure you are not allowing everyone to see information like your profile picture or status:

Touch the settings icon at the bottom right of your screen.

- Under **Account**, set security notifications, setup two-step verification, setup email address, setup passkeys, change your number or delete your account
- Under **Privacy**, set who can see or access your information turn off your live location sharing.
- Under **Chats** backup or export chats, choose to archive chats.
- Under **Notifications**, choose what you are notified about.



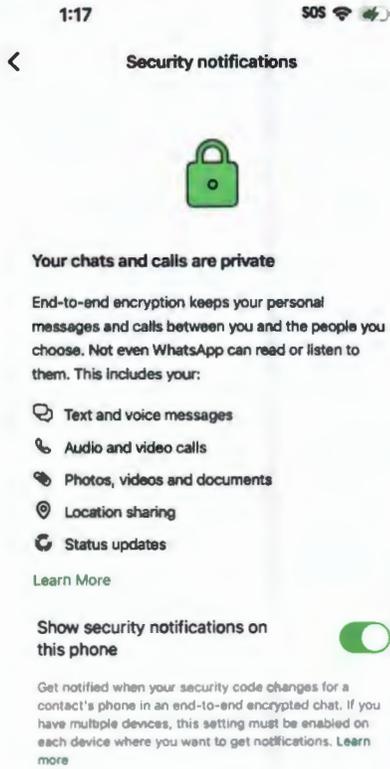
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ACCOUNT INFORMATION

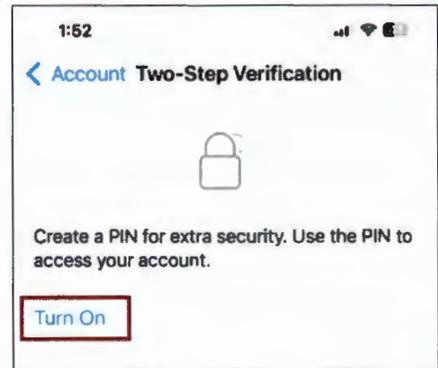


Enable security notifications to notify you when your security code changes for a contact's phone number.

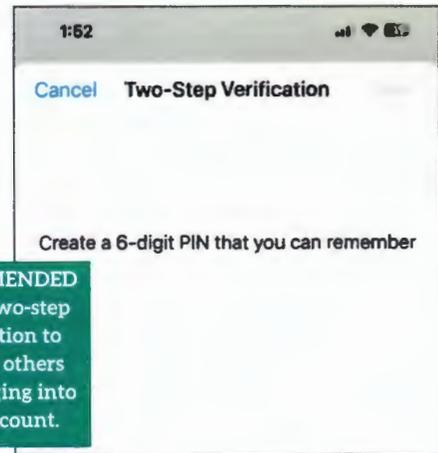
- Security notifications
- Two-step verification
- Email address
- Passkeys
- Change number

Request account info

Delete my account



RECOMMENDED Enable two-step verification to prevent others from logging into your account.

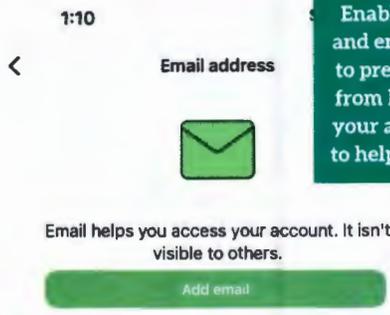


Change your number to migrate your account into - set to a new phone number.

Cancel Change number Next



Change number instead



RECOMMENDED Enable passkeys and email address to prevent others from logging into your account, and to help you log in.

Use Change Number to migrate your account info, groups and settings from your current phone number to a new phone number. You can't undo this change.

To proceed, confirm that your new number can receive SMS or calls and tap Next to verify that number.

WARNING: Deleting your account will delete your account info and your message history on the device.



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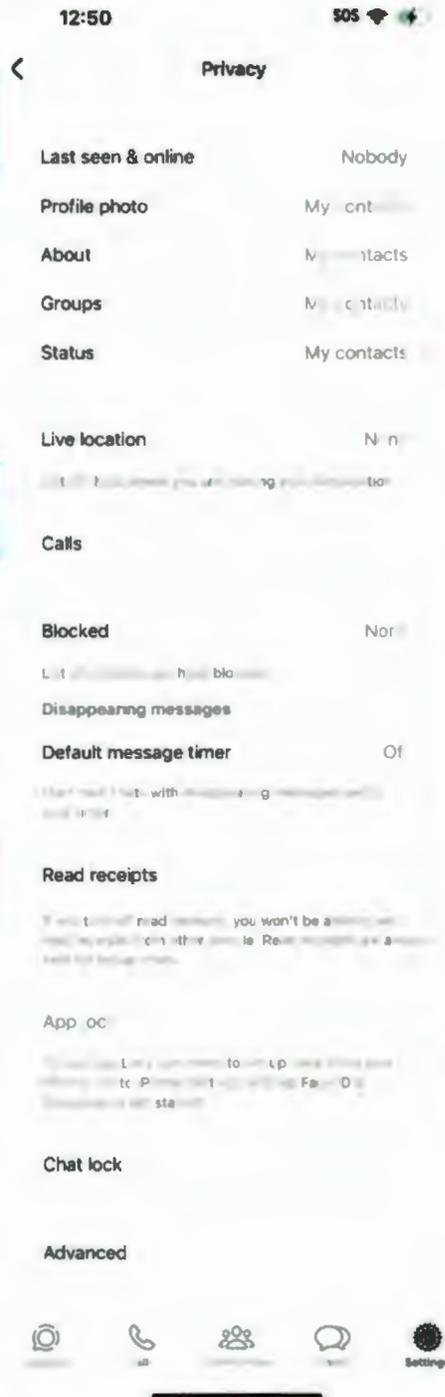
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PRIVACY SETTINGS

Check your privacy settings by doing a Privacy Checkup.

Turn Live Location to **None** to prevent sharing your current location.

Turn on or off read receipts. Read receipts are always on for group chats.



Under Last seen, Profile photo, About, Groups, and Status, set your privacy to either *Nobody*, *Everyone*, or *My Contacts*.

Block Contacts - Block individuals or contacts from your friends list if you no longer want them to see your activities, posts, profile photo, and other account information.

App Lock - require face ID to unlock WhatsApp

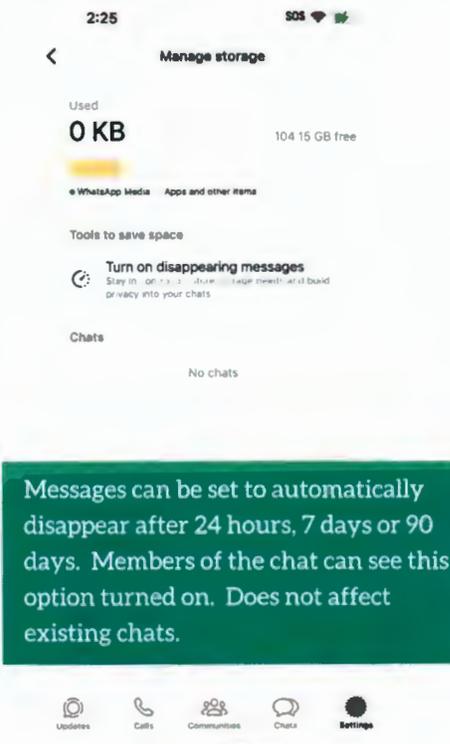
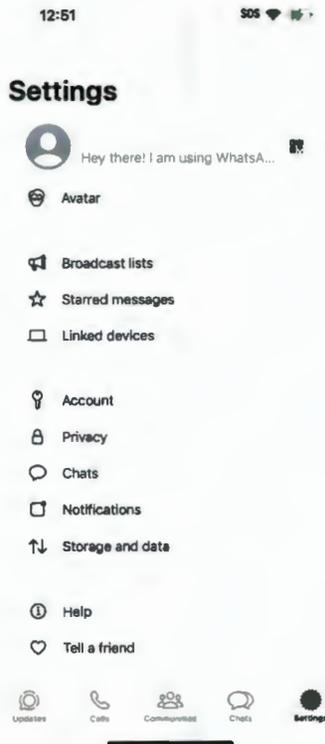




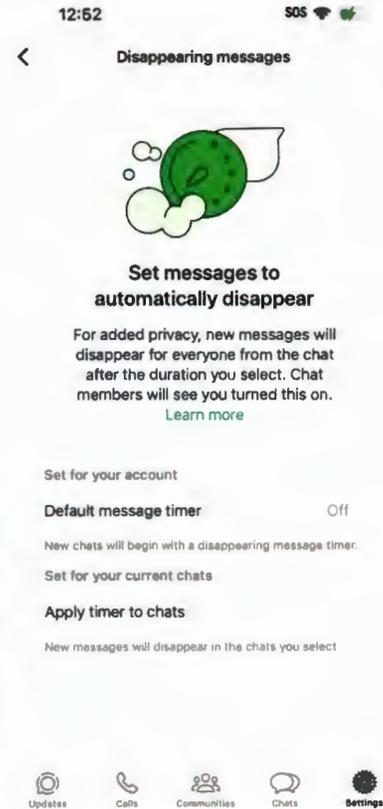
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DISAPPEARING MESSAGES

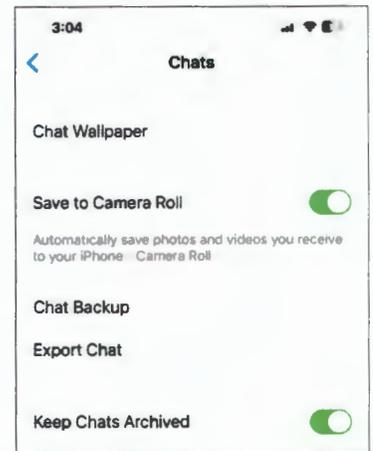
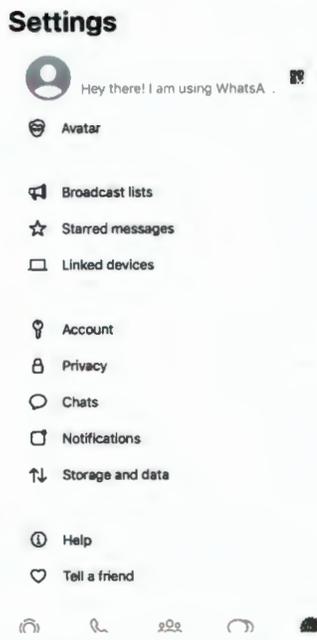


Messages can be set to automatically disappear after 24 hours, 7 days or 90 days. Members of the chat can see this option turned on. Does not affect existing chats.



BACKUP CHATS

Backup chats to save them to iCloud - data is not stored on WhatsApp servers so if you get a new device you must backup your data to transfer. Set Auto backup in this area. Individual or group chats can be exported to be saved outside the app.





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USEFUL LINKS

Safe Search Kids

<https://www.safesearchkids.com/>

Microsoft Safety & Security

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/4091455/windows-protect-privacy-internet>

OnGuard Online

<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/feature-0038-onguardonline>

WhatsApp Help

<https://faq.whatsapp.com/?lang=en>



<https://consumer.sd.gov/> 1-800-300-1986



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