

COVID-19 Communication

Avoiding Scams During Times Of Pandemic

During times of uncertainty, there is often an unfortunate increase in scam-related and fraudulent activities. Scammers who choose to prey on people’s fears have several options to obtain your personal data or other valuable assets. Thankfully, organizations such as the Better Business Bureau and Federal Trade Commission can help deter scammers and educate the public on ways to prevent themselves from falling victim.

Please visit: <https://www.bbb.org/article/tips/8767-bbb-tips-10-steps-to-avoid-scams> for a list of ways to avoid general telephone, email and social media scams.

Please read and familiarize yourself with this list of tactics scammers may use related to the coronavirus.

Scam	Actions	What To-Do	Source Information
COVID-19 Fake Cures	Scammers are peddling fake coronavirus remedies ranging from colloidal silver to cow manure.	This virus is new and — while vaccine trials are underway — there is no cure at this time. Do not believe anyone claiming to have a known remedy for sale.	https://time.com/5806518/covid-19-scams/
Free Cell Phones	Text messages and emails containing links to phishing sites (or other potential malware) claim to offer free cell phones to aid in COVID-19 relief.	Do not click these links. They can compromise personal data stored on your cell phone. Immediately report the message as spam and delete it.	U.S. House candidate Katie Porter on Twitter
Fake Products And Price Gouging	Amazon has removed over one million products for making false claims related to COVID-19 and thousands of products that were attempting to price gouge consumers.	If you received correspondence regarding an order you didn't place, it likely wasn't from Amazon. Send the email as an attachment to stop-spoofing@amazon.com .	Good Housekeeping: How to Keep Yourself Safe From Coronavirus Scams and Fake Health Products Amazon: About Identifying Whether an E-mail, Phone Call, or Webpage is from Amazon

Mobile Malware	Scams often play on our fears and need for information. Apps such as CovidLock and websites with names linking them to COVID-19 can mine for visitors' personal data.	The best way to protect yourself is by only visiting the sites of reputable organizations like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The CDC is a federal agency and is the safety source for information about COVID-19.	Cnet: Coronavirus scams target your fear. Don't let them
Charity Scams	Playing on our heartstrings, many scammers have set up fake charities.	Please visit the Federal Trade Commission for a comprehensive guide on charity scams. The FTC lists several legitimate sites that can help you research charities before donating.	Visit Charity Navigator for a list of legitimate charities working to help provide relief to those effected by COVID-19.
Door-to-Door Testing	There have been reports throughout the country warning citizens about people dressed as CDC workers or American Red Cross volunteers going door-to-door offering COVID-19 vaccines or testing.	There are no reputable organizations door-to-door offering testing at this time. Do not open the door for these individuals. Call your local authorities immediately and report them.	Bloomberg: New York Warns of Door-Knocking Scammers Offering CDC Virus Tests

Other Useful Information:

- **Coronavirus relief checks are still being debated by Congress, and experts say scammers are already looking to cash in:**
<https://www.cnbc.com/2020/03/19/what-to-know-about-scams-looking-to-cash-in-on-1000-dollar-covid-19-check.html>
- **Credit card fraud during coronavirus: Here's what to look out for:**
<https://www.cnbc.com/select/credit-card-fraud-coronavirus/>
- **Scammers are trying to trick people into reserving a COVID-19 vaccine over the phone:**
<https://www.theverge.com/2020/3/19/21186098/phone-scam-cdc-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccine-reservation-police>