

Pandemic Preparedness: Fraud Alerts and Prevention

Government Payout/Stimulus Scams

The Federal Trade Commission has created resources related to the potential fraud that may be forthcoming as a result of the Coronavirus. As outlined in a recent blog post, there are a few important things for consumers to know, no matter what type of government intervention there may be for a stimulus:

1. The government will not ask you to pay anything up front to get this money. No fees. No charges. No nothing.
2. The government will not call to ask for your Social Security number, bank account, or credit card number. Anyone who does is a scammer.
3. These reports of checks aren't yet a reality. Anyone who tells you they can get you the money now is a scammer.

The blog further goes on to indicate:

Normally, we'd wait to know what the payment plan looks like before we put out a message like this. But these aren't normal times. And we predict that the scammers are gearing up to take advantage of this.

So, remember: no matter what this payment winds up being, only scammers will ask you to pay to get it. If you spot one of these scams, please tell the Federal Trade Commission: www.ftc.gov/complaint. We're doing our best to stop these scammers in their tracks, and your report will help.

Avoid Coronavirus Scams

Here are some specific Coronavirus Scams and tips directly from the FTC's website:

- [Don't click on links from sources you don't know](#). They could download viruses onto your computer or device.
- Watch for emails claiming to be from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or experts saying they have information about the virus. For the most up-to-date information about the Coronavirus, visit the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) and the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO).
- Ignore online offers for vaccinations. *There currently are **no** vaccines, pills, potions, lotions, lozenges or other prescription or over-the-counter products available to treat or cure Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) — online or in stores.*
- Do your homework when it comes to donations, whether through [charities](#) or crowdfunding sites. Don't let anyone rush you into making a donation. If someone wants donations in cash, by gift card, or by wiring money, don't do it.

Keep up to date with different trends and information directly from the [FTC's Coronavirus Scams Page](#)