

CORONAVIRUS FRAUD TASK FORCE

The Middle District of Tennessee Coronavirus Fraud Task Force is led by the United States Attorney's Office in partnership with fraud investigators from various investigative agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI). The mission of the Task Force is to identify, investigate, and prosecute fraud related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic in Middle Tennessee.

REPORT CORONAVIRUS FRAUD:

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The FBI at: www.ic3.gov

The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation
at: TipsToTBI@tn.gov

For more information visit:

www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud

THE BEST PROTECTION FROM BECOMING A VICTIM IS BEING INFORMED

- **COVID-19 Economic Impact Scams:** Scammers claiming to be from the IRS or other agencies will ask for your banking information or attempt to have you to sign over your economic impact payment check. The IRS will never ask for this type of information.
- **Supply Scams:** Scammers are creating fake shops, websites, social media accounts, and email addresses claiming to sell medical supplies currently in high demand, such as surgical masks and hand sanitizers. When consumers attempt to purchase supplies through these channels, fraudsters pocket the money without providing the promised supplies.
- **Provider Scams:** Scammers are contacting people by phone and email, claiming to be doctors and hospitals that have treated a friend or relative for COVID-19, and demand payment.
- **Charity Scams:** Scammers are soliciting donations for individuals, groups, and areas affected by COVID-19, and using the money for personal gain.
- **Phishing Scams:** Scammers posing as national and global health authorities, including the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), are sending phishing emails designed to trick recipients into downloading malware or providing personal identifying and financial information.
- **App Scams:** Scammers are creating and manipulating mobile apps designed to track the spread of COVID-19 to insert malware that will compromise users' devices and personal information.
- **Investment Scams:** Scammers are offering online promotions on various platforms, including social media, claiming that the products and services of publicly traded companies can prevent, detect, or cure COVID-19, and that the stock of these companies will dramatically increase in value as a result. These promotions, often styled as "research reports," make predictions of a specific "target price," and relate to microcap stocks, or low-priced stocks issued by the smallest of companies with limited publicly available information.
- **Price Gouging Scams:** Individuals and businesses are selling essential goods, like masks and hand sanitizer, at significantly higher prices than in a non-emergency setting.

IF YOU ARE AWARE OF POTENTIAL CORONAVIRUS FRAUD,
OR FEEL YOU MAY HAVE BEEN A VICTIM,
REPORT IT IMMEDIATELY

HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF?

1. DON'T GIVE OUT YOUR BANK ACCOUNT INFORMATION:

Never give out your bank account information or social security number over the phone. The IRS will NEVER ask for this type of information .

2. FACT CHECK INFORMATION:

Contact trusted sources to verify information before you pass it on. For the latest information from the Centers for Disease Control visit www.CDC.gov.

3. HANG UP ON ROBOCALLS:

Scammers are using illegal robocalls to pitch everything from scam coronavirus treatments to home test kits.

4. AVOID CLICKING ON UNKNOWN LINKS:

Don't respond to text messages or emails about checks from anyone .

5. RESEARCH CHARITABLE DONATIONS:

Do your homework when it comes to donations, whether through charities or crowdfunding sites.

A MESSAGE FROM U.S. ATTORNEY DONALD Q. COCHRAN

"Communities in Middle Tennessee are particularly vulnerable now because of the devastating tornadoes and recent escalation of the Coronavirus. Sadly, these unfortunate scenarios present opportunities for fraudsters to prey upon those who are struggling to get through a single day with hopes of returning to a normal life. We will not allow our current circumstances to become an open door for those who would take advantage of this temporary plight of humanity. Forty-two dedicated federal prosecutors in our office, along with our law enforcement partners, will bring to justice those who attempt to exploit the public, especially during the most vulnerable times in our nation's history."

REPORT SUSPECTED FRAUD

Con artists count on the victim's reluctance to admit that he/she has been duped. Remember, if you never report the crime, the perpetrator is free to cheat others again and again, and you may lose the chance to recoup your money.



The mission of the Elder Justice Initiative is to support and coordinate the Department's enforcement and programmatic efforts to combat elder abuse, neglect and scams that target our nation's seniors.

ELDER JUSTICE INITIATIVE COVID-19 AWARENESS

FOR ASSISTANCE
Justice.gov/elderjustice



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