

Avoiding COVID-19 Scams

Keyla Hernandez-Ulloa
Consumer Affairs and
Outreach Division



Topics

- **About the Consumer Affairs and Outreach Division**
- **COVID-19 Scams**
- **Resources**
- **Robocalls and Spoofing**

Consumer Affairs and Outreach Division

The Consumer Affairs and Outreach Division (CAOD) engages with the public through outreach and education initiatives to inform them about important consumer-related regulatory programs, telecommunications issues and other issues that impact daily life.

COVID-19 Scams



Sample Delivery Scam Text

Text Message

Today 9:34 AM

**Hi, we are having issues releasing
your package**

**Please update shipping directions
ca.trcck.com/.1ebf9d**

Reply Stop to Opt Out



As the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic continues to impact the United States, phone scammers have seized the opportunity to prey on consumers.

A text message scam may falsely advertise a cure or an offer to be tested for coronavirus.

SCAMS

#COVID19

Do not click on links in texts related to the virus!



For more information about scam calls and texts, visit [fcc.gov/consumers](https://www.fcc.gov/consumers)

#ProtectingConsumers

#FCCtips

Do not click on links in texts related to the virus, and check [fcc.gov/covid-scams](https://www.fcc.gov/covid-scams) for more scam information.



Sanitize Your Phone

- Unplug the device before cleaning.
- Use a lint-free cloth slightly dampened with soap and water.
- Don't spray cleaners directly onto the device.
- Avoid aerosol sprays and cleaning solutions that contain bleach or abrasives.
- Keep liquids and moisture away from any openings on the device.

5 TIPS TO SANITIZE YOUR PHONE AND YOUR OTHER DEVICES

Your mobile phone may be the item you touch the most throughout the day. With the COVID-19 pandemic, phone hygiene is a growing concern. Health experts suggest cleaning your phone at least once a day as a preventative measure.

01 SAFETY FIRST
Unplug the device before cleaning.

02 WHAT TO USE
Use a lint-free cloth slightly dampened with soap and water. Alcohol-based wipes can also be used.

03 HOW TO CLEAN
Don't spray cleaners directly onto the device.

04 SAFE PRODUCTS
Avoid aerosol sprays and cleaning solutions that contain bleach or abrasives.

05 PROTECT YOUR DEVICES
Keep liquids and moisture away from any openings on the device.

WASH AWAY THE GERMS

Scam Glossary

The FCC's Scam Glossary available at www.fcc.gov/scam-glossary contains information about consumer fraud.

Examples of COVID-19 Scams:

- **Bogus COVID-19 Tests and Pharmacy Offers**
- **Peer-to-Peer Mobile Payment Apps**
- **Package Delivery Scams**

Additional Resource

Requests for accessible formats of this information - Braille, large print or screen-reader friendly versions - can be sent to

fcc504@fcc.gov

American Sign Language Resources

- **The Federal Communications Commission recently launch an ASL Video on COVID-19 Scams. It is currently available at the American Sign Language Video Library at <https://www.fcc.gov/asl-video-library> and on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jvGbzQHpMBo>.**
- **The video offers tips for avoiding COVID-19 Scams and information for how to file an informal complaint via www.fcc.gov/complaints or through the ASL Consumer Support Line, call 844-432-2275.**

Robocalls

- **Robocalls are made with an auto dialer or use a prerecorded or artificial voice. Technological advances make it easier to place illegal robocalls that mask the identity of the caller.**
- **Not all robocalls are illegal.**

Robocall Tips

- **Don't answer calls from a number you do not recognize.**
- **If you pick up the call and you are asked to press a button to stop getting calls, hang up.**
- **Do not answer any questions, especially those that can be answered with "Yes." Your response may be recorded and used fraudulently for unauthorized purchases or illegal activity.**
- **Never provide personal information such as date of birth, account numbers, Social Security numbers, passwords, Mother's maiden name or other identifying information to unknown or unexpected callers.**

Additional Robocall Tips

- If you receive an unexpected call from someone claiming to be from a company or agency, asking for personal information, hang up. Look up the phone number on their website, a recent statement or the phone book.
- More information: www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/stop-unwanted-robocalls-and-texts

Spooftng

- Spooftng occurs when a caller deliberately falsifies the information transmitted to your caller ID display to disguise their identity.
- Spooftng someone else's phone number is illegal when it is done with the intent to defraud, cause harm or wrongly obtain anything of value.
- More information: www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/spooftng-and-caller-ID.

Spoofting Tips

- **When you receive a call and you are in doubt if the call is legitimate or not, let the call go to voice mail or an answering machine.**
- **Ask your service provider if and what call blocking tools they offer.**
- **Check to see what apps you can download to your mobile device.**

Tips to Avoid Being Scammed

A reminder of some tips to avoid being scammed include:

- **Do not respond to calls or texts from unknown numbers.**
- **Be cautious if you are being pressured to share any information or make an immediate payment.**

If you believe you have been a victim of a COVID-19 Scam immediately report it to the National Center for Disaster Fraud Hotline at 866-720-5721. For COVID-19 robocall or text scams file an informal consumer complaint at www.fcc.gov/complaints.

Resources

- Consumer Help Center: www.fcc.gov/consumers
- COVID-19 Scams: www.fcc.gov/covid-scams
- Consumer Affairs and Outreach Division: www.fcc.gov/outreach and outreach@fcc.gov.
- Consumer Complaint Center: www.consumercomplaints.fcc.gov or call 1-888-CALL FCC (1-888-225-5322).

Thank You!

Keyla Hernandez-Ulloa

Associate Division Chief

Consumer Affairs and Outreach Division

Keyla.Hernandez-Ulloa@fcc.gov