# Avoiding COVID-19 Scams

Keyla Hernandez-Ulloa Consumer Affairs and Outreach Division



# Topics

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#### **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-realted 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.

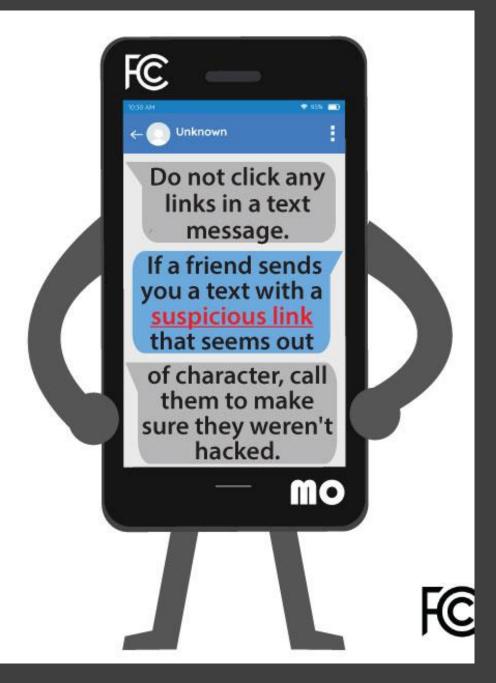


For more information about scam calls and texts, visit fcc.gov/consumers

**#COVID19** 

#### **#ProtectingConsumers** #FCCtips

Do not click on links in texts related to the virus, and check 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.



# Scam Glossary

The FCC's Scam Glossary available at <u>www.fcc.gov/scam-glossary</u> 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 <u>https://www.fcc.gov/asl-video-</u> <u>library</u> and on YouTube at <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jvGbzQHpMBo</u>.

• The video offers tips for avoiding COVID-19 Scams and information for how to file an informal complaint via <a href="http://www.fcc.gov/complaints">www.fcc.gov/complaints</a> 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: <u>www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/stop-unwanted-</u>

robocalls-and-texts

# Spoofing

- Spoofing occurs when a caller deliberately falsifies the information transmitted to your caller ID display to disguise their identity.
- Spoofing 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: <u>www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/spoofing-and-caller-</u>
  ID.

# **Spoofing 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 <u>www.fcc.gov/complaints</u>.

## Resources

- Consumer Help Center: <u>www.fcc.gov/consumers</u>
- COVID-19 Scams: <u>www.fcc.gov/covid-scams</u>
- Consumer Affairs and Outreach Division: <u>www.fcc.gov/outreach</u> and <u>outreach@fcc.gov</u>.
- Consumer Complaint Center: <u>www.consumercomplaints.fcc.gov</u> 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