

Let's Talk Finances

How to Avoid COVID-19 Government Imposter Scams



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Many of us are paying close attention to the guidance from federal, state, and local governments during this COVID-19 health emergency. Unfortunately, scammers are also paying attention. Some are even pretending to be affiliated with the government – just to scam you out of money.

Here are three ways you can help protect yourself and others from these scammers:

1. **Know that the government will never call, text, or contact you on social media saying you owe money, or to offer help getting your Economic Impact Payment (EIP) faster.** If you get a message from someone claiming to be from a government agency through social media, it's a scam. Report it to the FTC at ftc.gov/complaint. If you are eligible and haven't yet gotten your Economic Impact Payment, visit irs.gov and follow the guidance found there.
2. **Visit government websites directly for trustworthy information.** Don't click on links in an email or text message. Scammers often send fake links to websites that look like they're from the government, but are actually designed to collect your personal information and use it to defraud you. Instead of clicking on links in messages, open a new browser window and search for the name of the government agency. You can also visit coronavirus.gov for the most up-to-date information on the pandemic.
3. **Say "NO"** to anyone claiming to be from a government agency who requests cash, gift cards, wire transfers, cryptocurrency, or personal and financial information, whether they contact you by phone, text, email, or by showing up in person. Don't share your Social Security, Medicare ID, driver's license, bank account, or credit card numbers with anyone, unless you are the one who initiated the contact.

For the most up-to-date information on avoiding COVID-19 related scams, visit ftc.gov/coronavirus/scams.