



DAVE YOST
OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL

**MEDIA
CONTACT:**
Dominic
Binkley:
614-728-4127

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AG Yost Warns of an Outbreak of Scams Related to Coronavirus

(COLUMBUS, Ohio) — Fear and uncertainty surrounding the coronavirus pandemic could give rise to an outbreak of scams, Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost warns.

“COVID-19 is not the only thing we have to protect ourselves against,” Yost said. “Thieves and crooks prey on fear and uncertainty. Ohioans need to inoculate themselves against an outbreak of scams with knowledge and good practices.”

Yost encourages Ohioans to follow these tips to avoid coronavirus-related scams:

- Watch out for emails claiming to be from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or other expert sources with special advice or information about the coronavirus. Legitimate information is available for free on the [CDC's website](#).
- Ignore online advertisements promoting cures for the coronavirus. According to the Federal Trade Commission, “There currently are no vaccines, pills, lotions, lozenges or other prescription or over-the-counter products available to treat or cure Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) online or in stores.”
- Research nonprofit organizations and crowdfunding campaigns before donating. A [database of registered charities](#) is available on the Ohio Attorney General's website. Avoid groups that pressure you into donating and never donate via cash, gift cards, wire transfer or prepaid money card. These are the preferred payment methods of scammers.
- Be cautious of anyone going door to door offering coronavirus testing or temperature readings and requesting personal information. Call law enforcement immediately if you see a suspicious person. Never let strangers into your home.
- Beware of emails and other attempts to “phish” for your personal, financial and medical information. When in doubt, do not share. If the source claims to be your bank or a government agency, confirm they are legitimate by calling the organization at a phone number you have verified.
- Amid discussions of providing working families with government checks, know that nothing has been formalized yet. For more information, visit the [Federal Trade Commission](#) website and stay tuned for updates from reliable news sources.
- When online, avoid clicking on unknown links or pop-ups and never download any suspicious email attachment. Doing so could infect your devices with malicious software designed to steal your personal information or lock your computer until you pay a ransom.

Consumers who suspect an unfair or deceptive sales practice should contact the Ohio Attorney General's Office at www.OhioProtects.org or 800-282-0515.