

## 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](http://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 THOMAS T. CULLEN

"Exploiting a global pandemic for financial gain is not only morally reprehensible, it is likely criminal. Federal prosecutors in Virginia are working closely with the FBI and the Virginia State Police to identify individuals who are engaging in coronavirus fraud, in its various forms, and preying on vulnerable populations. We are focused on the fraud, not the amount of the loss, and will utilize all available tools and statutes to put bad actors in federal prison."

## REPORT SUSPECTED FRAUD

Con-artists count on their victim's reluctance to admit they have been duped. Remember, if you never report the crime, they are free to cheat others again and again and you have no chance of ever getting your money back.



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 financial fraud and scams that target our nation's seniors.

## ELDER JUSTICE INITIATIVE COVID-19 AWARENESS FOR MORE INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

[Justice.gov/elderjustice](http://Justice.gov/elderjustice)



Office of the  
United States Attorney  
Western District of Virginia

Thomas T. Cullen  
United States Attorney

Michael Baudinet, AUSA Western  
District Coronavirus Fraud  
Coordinator

Ronald M. Huber, AUSA  
Elder Justice Coordinator

Annette Cox,  
Victim Witness Assistance Program

## CORONAVIRUS FRAUD TASK FORCE

The Virginia Coronavirus Fraud Task Force is a joint federal and state partnership led by Assistant United States Attorneys from both the Western and Eastern Districts of Virginia, in partnership with fraud investigators from the FBI and the Virginia State Police. The mission of the task force is to identify, investigate, and prosecute fraud related to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic in Virginia.

### WHERE TO REPORT

For more information please visit:

[Justice.gov/usao-wdva/covid-19-fraud](https://www.justice.gov/usao-wdva/covid-19-fraud)

Western Virginia Coronavirus Fraud  
Coordinator, Assistant U.S. Attorney  
Michael Baudinet,  
[USAVAW.COVID19@usdoj.gov](mailto:USAVAW.COVID19@usdoj.gov)

Eastern Virginia Coronavirus Fraud  
Coordinator, Assistant U.S. Attorney  
Kaitlin G. Cooke,  
[Kaitlin.Cooke@usdoj.gov](mailto:Kaitlin.Cooke@usdoj.gov)

The FBI at: <https://www.ic3.gov>

The Virginia State Police at :  
[yfc@vfc.vsp.virginia.gov](mailto:yfc@vfc.vsp.virginia.gov)

## THE BEST PROTECTION FROM BECOMING A VICTIM IS BEING INFORMED

- **COVID-19 Economic Impact Scam:** Scammers will claim to be from the IRS or other agencies and 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. When consumers attempt to purchase supplies through these channels, fraudsters pocket the money and never provide 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 demanding payment.
- **Charity scams:** Scammers are soliciting donations for individuals, groups, and areas affected by COVID-19.
- **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 or 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 are 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 may sell essential goods, like hand sanitizer, for significantly higher prices than in a non-emergency setting. It is legally considered price gouging when the price of one of these products increases more than 20 percent its price one week prior to an emergency declaration from the Commonwealth of Virginia.

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