

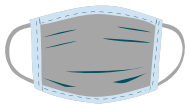
# PROTECT YOURSELF FROM CORONAVIRUS SCAMS

## Beware of Price Gouging:

North Carolina is under a State of Emergency and price gouging laws are in effect:

- It is illegal to charge excessive prices during an emergency. A price may be unreasonable if it exceeds the average price for the product or service during the preceding 60 days.
- Contact NC Attorney General's Office **1-877-5-NO-SCAM** or file an online complaint at **[ncdoj.gov](http://ncdoj.gov)**.

## Avoid These Scams and Fraudsters:



- Offering fake vaccines, cures, testing, air filters, Medicare COVID-19 "kit" scams. Currently there are no cures or vaccines for COVID-19.



- Don't answer or hang up on Robo-calls. Scammers are using robo-calls to pitch fake products, work-from-home schemes and insurance scams. Try to avoid answering the call at all – if it is someone you know they will leave you a voicemail.



- Avoid foreclosure rescue and "we buy homes" scams. Scammers search public records for homeowners in danger of property tax, mortgage, and HOA foreclosure. Never sign paperwork on the spot. Scammers often try to trick homeowners into signing away ownership by signing a deed or other legal documents without disclosing the true nature of the transaction.



- Be on the alert for Debt-Relief Scams. Avoid companies or out-of-state lawyers that offer to help. Under North Carolina law, it is illegal to collect upfront fees for debt settlement services. Often these companies do nothing but put you further in debt and damage your credit.



- Don't pay someone in advance to help you access benefits. The government will not ask you to pay anything up front to get the stimulus money. No fees. No charges. No nothing. See our April 19 post about stimulus payments.

**need help? contact Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy's  
Consumer Protection Program, 704-376-1600**



- Avoid Social Security scams. The government will not call to ask for your Social Security number, bank account, or credit card number. Anyone who does is a scammer. Don't "verify" your number or be scared into thinking your benefits are about to be suspended.



- Watch out for phishing emails and texts about the coronavirus that appear to be from health officials, experts, or anyone else. Don't open messages, click on links, or download attachments from senders you don't recognize.



- Be cautious of offers to help get groceries, do errands –there are a number of good Samaritans, but unfortunately there have also been reports of scams, money given, nothing delivered.



- Beware of "person in need" and grandparent scams. Scammers pose as a grandchild, friend or relative stranded or otherwise in trouble and need money quickly and quietly. They may ask for money by mail or gift card. Don't be pressured, hang up and call another relative or friend if you are still concerned to help you investigate.



- Be careful before you donate to a COVID-related charity. Check legitimacy through the North Carolina Secretary of State, Charity Watch, or Charity Navigator.



- Be cautious of any unsolicited door-to-door sales pitch or offers. Don't sign or agree to anything on the spot – if an offer seems too good to be true it probably is.

Scammers are always looking to take advantage of unsuspecting victims, especially in times of uncertainty. The more you and loved ones know about scams, the easier it is to spot and avoid them. Learn what you need to know to protect yourself and pass on the information.

Stay safe everyone!

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