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Just the Facts

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Better Business Bureau lists top six coronavirus scams

As the COVID-19 pandemic spreads, so does uncertainty and fear: two elements that con artists thrive on. During these stressful times, the Better Business Bureau recommends consumers to be especially alert to avoid falling for a scam. Below are the **top six** coronavirus scams along with as tips to help identify and avoid them.

Phony Cures and Fake Masks

BBB Scam Tracker has received numerous reports of people receiving emails and messages claiming that, for a price, they can buy products the government is supposedly keeping secret – ways to prevent or cure coronavirus. Medical experts are working hard to find a coronavirus vaccine, but none currently exists.

For more information on coronavirus cure scams, see the article **BBB Scam Alert: Afraid of Getting Sick? Don't Fall for a Coronavirus Con.**

Economic Impact Payment (Stimulus Check) Scams

As soon as stimulus packages are announced and approved, scammers quickly get to work sending out fake economic impact checks and asking consumers to pay fees to get their money earlier than what the IRS has promised. These claims are false and open consumers to the risk of identity theft and outright theft of the funds in their bank account.

To learn more about economic impact check scams, see the article, **Scam Alert: Government Relief Checks Trigger Latest Coronavirus Scam.**

Phishing Scams

Several people are now working from home and con artists have stepped up their phishing scams. They may claim to be from an official department of the employer to offer IT support or claim the company issued computer has a virus. They may use scare tactics, stating the computer will crash if you don't act immediately, all in an attempt to gain access to your computer remotely, or to your personal or company's information.

For more information on coronavirus phishing scams see the articles, **BBB Scam Alert: Working from home? Beware of scams targeting at-home workers** and **BBB**

Tips: 10 Tips to Stay Cyber Secure When Working Remotely.

Government Impersonation

Another common phishing scam brought on by the coronavirus pandemic is fake emails and text messages claiming the government needs you to take an "online coronavirus test" by clicking a link they provide. No such test currently exists but if you click on the link, scammers can download malware onto your computer and gain access to your sensitive personal information.

For more information on coronavirus phishing scams see the article **BBB Scam Alert: "Mandatory" COVID-19 Test Texts are a Scam.** In Canada, report these cases to the **Anti-Fraud Centre.**

Employment Scams

Many people are looking for work online in the wake of coronavirus shutdowns. Fraudsters find ways to take advantage of this by posting phony work-from-home jobs promising remote work with good pay and no interview required. These cons often use real company names and can be very convincing.

After you are "hired," the company may charge you upfront for "training." You may need to provide your personal and banking information to run a credit check or set up direct deposit. You may be "accidentally" overpaid with a fake check and asked to deposit the check and wire back the difference. Or, you are asked to buy expensive equipment and supplies to work at home.

To protect yourself from employment scams, see the article, **Scam Alert: Coronavirus Creates "Perfect Storm" for Scammers.**

Shortage Scams (Price Gouging)

Supplies such as hand sanitizer, face masks, and toilet paper are selling out in stores across the U.S. and Canada. Scammers take advantage of this situation and stockpile items in high demand. Then, they seek out potential clients, online and in person, and sell the products at extremely high prices. Price gouging is illegal and high

See SCAMS on other side

Bertha's



By
BERTHA PARSONS

Let's Be Goofy!

Have you ever done anything goofy? Ok, let's be honest. If you're like me, we've done a lot of goofy things. Please don't ask my kids!

In September 2019, we were invited to a black-tie event and I had a black dress I could wear for such an occasion. Looking in my closet I found no dress. After going through five more closets it was clear someone had broken in and taken my dress. So not until Feb. 2020 did someone return my dress and hide it under one of my spring coats. Goofy am I!

For my birthday one year our oldest sent me "Party Socks", that's what it says on them! I've worn them to many parties and today I sit here writing to you with my party socks on. So, let's get with it and throw a party! I'd like it to be goofy! Put on your craziest outfit, you know, that mismatched shirt and pants. Maybe come with rollers in your hair and no make-up. Don't look now, but Goofy just showed up!

Can you believe April is here already? Spring is bringing us grass to mow, blooming flowers to enjoy, a chance to clean the house and garage thoroughly! Spring is the busiest time of year. You might say I am goofy about spring! There's nothing like the smell of new-mown grass or hamburgers on the grill. There are flowers peeking out at us and of course, weeds! Like life, we have flowers, but also weeds! Somehow, we learn to handle the weeds (sadness, debt, change and pain) in our lives. Then, hanging in there, after weeks or months, the flowers showed up and the weeds withered away!

Here comes goofy! For those who did not know my mother, AKA "Aunt Martha," I'm sorry. She seriously loved the Lord, her family, her friends and strangers. However, there was a side of her that made her grandchildren laugh out loud! She would get goofy over some little thing and laugh until she cried, and we had no idea what was so funny. Seemed like her goofy, "I don't know what I'm laughing at," gave all of us and anyone around her, joy. That is a gift we all could give.

Now is the time to laugh and be goofy, even if just for a few minutes or a few hours, it lights up the day!

Each of us precious people must decide how to best live our very own life! I prefer a little goofy now and then, laugh 'til I cry and remember, to everything there a beginning and an end. Try a little goofy today, you may just like it!

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Scams continued from other side

demands for products can lead to con artists selling products that are used, defective, or otherwise mishandled. In some cases, scammers will con people out of their money by accepting payments for products that don't exist.

This has been an issue with face masks. Masks are sold out in most local stores and major online sellers. Instead, consumers are turning to unfamiliar online shops. Unfortunately, phony sellers abound. These scam online retailers take shoppers' money – as well as personal information – and never deliver the masks.

How to Avoid Coronavirus Scams

These scams will evolve as the pandemic crisis continues sometimes mimicking one scam for another. Being prepared to spot and reports scams is more critical than ever.

Report price gouging. Anyone who suspects price gouging during a declared state of emergency should report it to [BBB.org/AdTruth](https://www.bbb.org/adtruth). This nonprofit organization will follow up with reported companies and will work with the appropriate agencies to address particularly grievous cases.

Think twice before you click. If you receive an unsolicited text or email from someone you don't know asking you to click on a link, don't do it. In a reported recent

scam, consumers received SMS messages saying a mandatory online coronavirus test was necessary, one they could complete by clicking a link. Scammers are using links and attachments like these that will download malware onto your electronic devices and steal personal information.

Do your homework. Even if a call or message seems to come from an official source, research it before handing over sensitive information, such as your name, address, or banking information. Scammers often try to earn consumers' trust by impersonating reputable, official institutions.

Don't accept calls from strangers. Con artists may call your home claiming to work for the government or healthcare system. Remember, neither the government, nor any healthcare related agencies make unsolicited calls

From the Blotter

Josh R. Hasbargen, 26, of Hoopeston, was arrested after a traffic stop at 3:29 p.m. Sunday in the 200 block of South Second Ave. He was charged with no valid driver's license, operating an uninsured vehicle and possession of drug paraphernalia. He was released on a notice to appear in Hoopeston City Court on the paraphernalia charge and in Vermilion County traffic court for no valid license.

Obituaries

BELL - Barbara Bell, 59, of Hoopeston, died at 1:20 a.m. Monday, April 6, 2020, at Carle Hoopeston Regional Health Center. Arrangements are pending at Anderson Funeral Home, Hoopeston.

FRANKLIN - Tonya Franklin, 51, of Jasper, Tex., formerly of Hoopeston, died at 12:56 p.m. Friday, March 27, 2020, in Lufkin, Tex. She was cremated and a celebration of her life will be held at a later date. Anderson Funeral Home is handling arrangements. Online condolences may be left at www.anderson-funeral-home.com.

MEADOR - Terry W. Meador, 70, of Collison, died at 4:40 a.m. Sunday, April 5, 2020, at Carle Foundation Hospital, Urbana. Due to current health concerns, private family graveside service will be held. A visitation of family and friends will be held at a later date. Memorials are suggested to Collison Masonic Lodge P.O. Box 42 Collison, IL 61831 or the First Christian Church Disciples of Christ 502 E. Main St. Hoopeston, IL 60942. Anderson Funeral Home is handling arrangements. Online condolences may be left at www.anderson-funeral-home.com.

to individuals.

Avoid any "miracle" cures. Some scammers have been advertising miraculous cures and secret government vaccines The claims are false as there are no U.S. Food and Drug Administration-approved vaccines or drugs to prevent coronavirus, and no approved vaccines, drugs, or products specifically for curing coronavirus available for purchase online or in stores.

Watch out for employment and unemployment scams. If you are looking for work and find an online job offer that sounds too good to be true, beware. Con artists

Weather

Partly sunny, then chance of showers today, tonight. High 72, low 38. Tomorrow, breezy. High 48, low 31. For real time Hoopeston weather, visit justthefacts.net/weather/.

Classifieds

HELP WANTED

Silgan Containers is hiring Press Line Mechanics. To apply, please visit <https://silgancontainers.mua.hrdepartment.com/hr/ats/Posting/view/10688>

The City of Hoopeston is accepting application for an eligibility list with the police department. If interested, you will need to pick up and turn in an application to the police department located at 301 W Main St. Hoopeston, IL by May 4, 2020. Testing date will take place on May 30, 2020 at Hoopeston Area High School Library.

Help wanted: tire and mechanic experience helpful. Apply in person. Smitty's Dual Wheel, Inc. 8 miles west of Rossville.

City of Hoopeston is accepting applications for seasonal workers. Applications may be picked up at City Hall, 301 W Main St.

Robinson Chiropractic, a thriving and expanding chiropractic clinic, is looking for team oriented, multi-tasking, detail-oriented people. Candidates will be trained to assist with patient care. Customer service and phone skills a must. Candidates must be enthusiastic, outgoing, positive, great with people and have an interest in natural health and wellness and be flexible as we continue to thrive and grow in offices. Send resumes to trina.keller@robchiro.com.

We are currently hiring for our Verizon location next to McDonald's in Hoopeston! Are you interested in pursuing a career in sales where you can earn a base plus commission? Then this position might just be for you! If you like sales, love technology and have a competitive spirit you may have what it takes to join our amazing team! You'll use your knowledge and passion for technology to deliver an effortless customer experience while pursuing challenging and rewarding goals! This role comes with

use job offers to steal your identity or banking information, or complete complex tasks for free as a trial. In addition, if you find yourself unemployed, only apply for unemployment benefits through official channels, otherwise, your personal information will be at risk.

Research before you donate. If you feel compelled to support a coronavirus related cause with a financial donation, make sure the charity is legitimate. Check [Give.org](https://www.give.org) to verify the trustworthiness of the charity.

Be alert to stimulus payment scams. According to official sources, payments are expected to be issued automatically, with no action required from most people. No one will call, email or text you from the government about your check, and you should never pay any fees to receive your stimulus payment. To get the latest updates on economic impact payments, check the official [irs.gov](https://www.irs.gov) website regularly.

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