



NEWS RELEASE

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ATTORNEY GENERAL RAVNSBORG CAUTIONS AGAINST CORONAVIRUS-RELATED SCAMS

PIERRE, S.D. – Attorney General Jason Ravensborg reminds South Dakotans to be on the lookout for scam artists taking advantage of the current Coronavirus emergency to find new victims.

The Division of Consumer Protection warns that other states have already seen scams using the Coronavirus, including a report of a scam involving a supposed automatic credit or bank charge for a Coronavirus test kit which can only be cancelled and refunded if the unsuspecting victim will “verify” their account information and mailing address.

“Sadly, with every national emergency or disaster con artists will be trying to take advantage of people during this time of need,” said Ravensborg. “Please verify anyone soliciting you while claiming to represent a charity or aid organization. When in doubt request extra verification, ask more questions, and contact our Division of Consumer Protection.”

Ravnsborg provided the following tips to help South Dakota citizens avoid scams:

1. Be alert to “phishing” emails – ones that appear to come from legitimate government agencies such as the Centers for Disease Control, especially if the email encourages you to click on a link for more information. Simply delete them without response.
2. Ignore phone calls, emails, advertising or mail items offering a miracle cure for, or protection against, Coronavirus. These are scams. There currently is no vaccine or cure. When one is available, residents can be sure that the appropriate government agencies will promptly provide information to the public. When receiving these calls do not press a number to be removed from the calling list.
3. Don’t be fooled by calls or text messages claiming that you are required to pay for testing or to provide personal information as part of a government response to the Coronavirus. These are scams. Be vigilant about not giving out your personal information via phone or any other means – you do not know who you may be giving this information to.
4. Businesses should be aware that the Google scam is prevalent at this time. The recorded message asks you to verify your Google account and that failure to do so will result in your business name being dropped from Google. This is a scam, do not press any key to talk to someone or to be removed from the calling list.
5. Beware of unauthorized or fraudulent charities or solicitations. Bogus charities will try to solicit donations during these emergencies. Do not donate any funds without doing your homework by visiting charitynavigator.org. Please contact the Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division at 1-800-300-1986, or email consumerhelp@state.sd.us if you have concerns or suspect fraud. You can also visit the website at www.consumer.sd.gov.

To stay informed on the latest developments related to Coronavirus please visit coronavirus.gov or covid.sd.gov

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