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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Attorney General Moody Warns of QR Code Scams



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody today issued a Consumer Alert warning Floridians about QR code scams. QR, or Quick Response, codes are codes arranged in black and white pixelated squares that can be scanned by your phone, tablet or other electronic device. The COVID-19 pandemic compelled many businesses to offer QR codes for customers to access information such as menus, tracking packages and viewing apps. According to the Better Business Bureau, scammers are reportedly replacing QR codes with fake codes leading consumers to phishing websites, automatically launching payment apps or downloading malicious malware.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “Many businesses are innovating how they share information to reduce person-to-person contact during the pandemic, turning to QR codes to eliminate the sharing of printed material. Sadly, scammers are taking advantage of this by changing QR codes to re-route consumers to malicious websites. Be wary when using QR codes and make sure that what you scan is approved by the business.”

To avoid QR code scams, Attorney General Moody is offering the following tips:

- Before scanning, make sure a QR code is from a reputable source;
- Watch for shortened URL links that may contain malware;
- Research and download a QR code app that has added security;

- Do not scan QR codes from an unknown source; and
- Look out for stickers placed over legitimate codes or other signs of tampering with codes at business locations.

Downloading security apps may help to keep devices free of malware but be sure to thoroughly research any such app to avoid mistakenly downloading malware.

If malicious malware is downloaded, visit the Google Support Help Center for information on how to remove unwanted ads, pop-ups and malware from a mobile phone or computer. Additionally, the Federal Trade Commission provides a detailed guide on how to recognize, remove and avoid malware.

To report a QR code scam, contact the Florida Attorney General's Office by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or file a complaint by visiting MyFloridaLegal.com.

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The Florida Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division issues Consumer Alerts to inform Floridians of emerging scams, new methods used to commit fraud, increased reports of common scams, or any other deceptive practice. Consumer Alerts are designed to notify Floridians about scams and available refunds in an effort to prevent financial losses or other harm caused by deceptive practices. Anyone encountering a scam should report the incident to the Florida Attorney General's Office by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or visiting MyFloridaLegal.com.