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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Beware of Malware that Drains Cellphone Batteries and Bank Accounts



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Moody is warning consumers about a new malware attack that targets mobile phone users. Accidentally downloading this malware gives scammers the ability to steal sensitive information—including mobile payment app logins, banking credentials and remote control of a target's phone.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "This pandemic has changed the way we send and receive money—moving more of these transactions online and increasing the popularity of mobile payment apps. This opens the door wider to hackers, phishing scammers and vicious malware attackers. Unknowingly falling for their traps could lead to devastating financial losses."

Attorney General Moody is providing the following tips to help Floridians avoid mobile malware attacks:

- Research phone apps before downloading;
- Never respond to a solicitation requesting financial information or online cash transfers;
- If a text message, email or phone call appears to be from a bank or other financial institution, look up the company online and make direct contact instead of responding to the solicitation; and
- Only send money to trusted individuals or businesses.

Signs that mobile malware is already on a phone include:

- Rapidly decreasing battery power;
- Large amounts of data being used, especially when the phone is not in use;
- Unexplained apps appearing on the phone; and
- Unauthorized purchases originating from a phone.

Google released information in its help center 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.

Downloading security apps may help to keep your device free of malware, but be sure to thoroughly research any such app through independent reviews to avoid mistakenly downloading malware.

To report a mobile malware scam, contact the Attorney General's Office at 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or file a complaint online at 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. To view recent Consumer Alerts and for other information about avoiding scams, visit MyFloridaLegal.com/ConsumerAlert.