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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

CA: COVID-19 Robocall Scams Abound



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody today issued a Consumer Alert warning Floridians about an increase in COVID-19 related robocalls. Even before the crisis, robocalls were a continuing problem for many Floridians. Now that more Floridians than ever are working remotely and responding to an increasing volume of phone calls, some may find it difficult to ignore unknown numbers.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “Times of crisis can bring out the best in people, as we are seeing with our brave medical professionals and first responders who are answering the call of duty in the face of this deadly pandemic. Sadly, they can also bring out the worst in people, like scammers exploiting the fear surrounding these challenging times, to try and steal personal or financial information. Floridians need to be on high alert to guard against scams—especially robocalls claiming to offer COVID-19 related products or benefits.”

There are recent reports of robocalls that offer everything from COVID-19 treatments and cures to work-from-home schemes. To listen to a few examples of recent calls, click here, here and here.

Robocalls often claim that pressing a number will direct the recipient of the call to a live operator or even remove the recipient from the caller’s robocall list, but don’t buy it. Pressing any button on the phone will likely lead to more robocalls.

Other tips to avoid COVID-19 robocall scams include:

- Do not trust Caller ID displays. Spoofing technology allows scammers to change phone displays to impersonate government agencies;
- Ignore robocalls, especially recordings offering vaccinations and home test kits. Scammers are trying to sell products not proven to treat or prevent COVID-19;
- Fact-check information. Scammers, and sometimes well-meaning people, share information that hasn't been verified. Before taking action or passing along any messages, check it out with trusted sources; and
- Consider using a call blocking app or device. Consumers should contact phone providers about available call-blocking options. To learn more, visit FTC.gov/calls.

Floridians should report robocalls to the FTC online at FTC.gov/complaint. Additionally, Floridians should be on the lookout for robocalls or any other messages attempting to exploit COVID-19 stimulus payments—as direct deposits are being made now.

Attorney General Moody previously issued a Consumer Alert warning Floridians about scammers using the new coronavirus stimulus package to target Floridians. The $2 trillion federal stimulus package includes individual payments, expanded unemployment coverage, student loan changes and much more. News of the historic stimulus package is providing ammo for scammers already trying to exploit the COVID-19 pandemic to rip off Floridians.

For more information, including a video about stimulus related scams, click here.

Anyone who encounters a coronavirus stimulus package scam or any other type of COVID-19 fraud should contact the Florida Attorney General's Office at 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or MyFloridaLegal.com.

To view previous Consumer Alerts about emerging COVID-19 related scams, click here.

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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.