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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

CONSUMER ALERT: Beware of New Voice Cloning Technology Scams



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody today issued a Consumer Alert to make Floridians aware of an innovative phone scam using new technology. Voice cloning technology enables users to make near-perfect reproductions of real people's voices. There are several promising uses for this technology. However, according to the Federal Trade Commission, the technology can also be used by scammers to extort money, and the Wall Street Journal reported the technology was used last year to steal more than $200,000 from a U.K.-based energy firm.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "Imagine receiving a call. The voice on the other end of the phone is familiar and is begging for help. Sadly, today, you may not always be able to trust what you hear. We all want to be there for those we love and care about, but with the emergence of new voice cloning technology, Floridians must be more vigilant than ever in watching for imposters and fraud before sharing financial or personal information. This is one of the scariest scams I have heard about since becoming Attorney General and I want to make sure consumers are aware of the ways technology can be used to exploit their good intentions."

With new voice cloning technology, scammers can create a near-perfect voice clone with less than a five-second recording of a person speaking. Scammers could then use the clone to call victims pretending to be the target's family member or friend asking for money in an emergency. Scammers could also target businesses by imitating a vendor who asks for payment. An easy way to determine whether the person on the phone is who they purport to be is to hang up and call back at a known phone number.

Floridians should keep these general tips in mind to guard against voice cloning scams:

- Never give out personal information, such as a Social Security number, date of birth, address, or financial information, such as bank account or credit card numbers, without confirming the identity of the requester or why the information is needed;
- Double-check the validity of statements if a caller, who claims to be a relative or friend, says there is an emergency and money is needed immediately;
- For business owners, ensure a culture of security among employees where more than one person signs off on vendor payments; and
- If in doubt about the caller, just hang up and call the number on file.

Fighting scams and fraud is a major tenet of the Attorney General's Office. Report scams by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or 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. To view recent Consumer Alerts and for other information about avoiding scams, visit MyFloridaLegal.com/ConsumerAlert.