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OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

VIDEO: National Cybersecurity Awareness Month



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody today issued a Consumer Alert in recognition of National Cybersecurity Awareness Month. Attorney General Moody wants all Floridians to be proactive in enhancing cybersecurity at home and at work, and is providing general online safety tips to avoid common online scams like tech support, malware, phishing and ransomware scams.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “Today more than ever, our daily lives are dependent on the internet. While advances in technology and the internet have broken down barriers, changed lives and connected people worldwide, there are villainous people on the internet who aim to take advantage of the speed and ease with which we share information. I want all Floridians to be safe as they travel the internet’s super highway, which is why I am issuing this Consumer Alert in recognition of National Cybersecurity Awareness Month.”

Many cyber scammers manipulate victims through email. Two common scams are phishing and malware email scams. Phishing scams involve scammers sending a message that looks like it comes from a trusted source. The scammer may then request money for services that never occur. Malware scams involve messages that include a link that, if clicked, infects the user’s computer with a virus. The scammer then demands payment to fix the computer for the user, but ultimately the user is often strung along by the scammer.

To avoid common email phishing or malware scams, follow these tips:

· Never open attachments in an email from an unknown source;
· Do not click on any links in an email that comes from an unknown source;
· Mark any suspicious emails as spam; and
· Keep security software installed and up-to-date.

In addition to scammers, there are also people on the internet who steal identities, hack into personal accounts and pilfer hard-earned money.

Tips for protecting consumer identities and financial information are:

· Ensure the internet browser has a secure connection—a padlock should appear in the URL bar if the session is secure;
· Do not include personal financial information in an email;
· Use a credit card instead of a debit card when online shopping. While both credit and debit card sales can be disputed, it may take more time to have money returned to a debit card. Additionally, some credit card providers offer single-use numbers to be used online to further protect financial information;
· Create different passwords for different sites—do not use the same password everywhere, and ensure a strong password by using upper- and lower-case letters, numbers and special characters;
· Never use public Wi-Fi to transmit or access private information;
· Always read privacy statements to determine how personal information will be used and whether it will be sold to third-parties;
· Enable two-factor authentication whenever possible; and
· Check your financial accounts regularly to ensure there are no duplicate or fraudulent charges.

For more tips on preventing identity theft, click here.

For more information on National Cybersecurity Awareness Month, click here.

The Attorney General issued a Consumer Alert earlier this year warning consumers about tech support scams. To view the alert, click here.

Report potential phishing or malware scam emails to the Florida Attorney General's office by visiting MyFloridaLegal.com, or calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM.

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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.