Jun 9, 2022

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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

VIDEO CA: Scam Tempts Targets w/ 'Free Gifts' for Personal Info



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody is warning Floridians about an emerging text message scam offering a ‘free gift’ for paying a bill on time. The Better Business Bureau details recent reports of this scheme that entices text recipients with the promise of a present to click on a link to an unfamiliar website requesting personal information. Attorney General Moody reminds Floridians to never use links from unknown phone numbers or reply to suspicious messages—especially if free gifts or money are promised.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “Scammers will try anything to steal your personal information. Their latest trick is simple, but effective—the promise of a gift in exchange for personal information. Don’t fall for it. Never provide personal information in response to a solicitation or click on links contained in a suspicious message. Remember that if something seems too good to be true, then it’s probably a scam.”

To avoid falling for ‘free gift’ text scams, Attorney General Moody recommends the following tips:

- Do not click on any links from an unknown sender—these links often contain malware or lead to harmful sites;
- If a company is mentioned in the message, check if the text is legitimate by looking up the company’s official website and contacting them at their listed phone number;
- Refrain from responding, as replying alerts the scammer that the number is active and may lead to more texts or calls;
- Block the phone number and delete the message; and
- Never send personal or financial information in response to an unsolicited text.

The BBB provides further details on how to spot red flags of scams involving text messages. For more information, click here.

To report free gift text scams, contact the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Internet Crime Complaint Center at IC3.gov, or visit the Federal Trade Commission's Report Fraud website, ReportFraud.FTC.gov.

To view other recent Consumer Alerts, visit our Consumer Alert webpage at MyFloridaLegal.com/ConsumerAlert.

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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.