



Financial Crime Trend Bulletin :

COVID-19 Frauds

2020-03-11

#KNOWFRAUD

#SHOWMETHEFRAUD

Fraud: Recognize. Reject. Report.

Purpose

This bulletin was prepared to warn consumers of COVID-19 related frauds that have already or may begin to occur in Canada.

Overview

As COVID-19 (coronavirus) continues to spread globally, the CAFC is warning the public to be on the lookout for associated scams. Fraudsters are creative and want to profit from consumers' fears, uncertainties and misinformation.

The following examples have been shared by consumers in other countries:

- Private companies offering 'fast' covid-19 tests for sale. *Only hospitals are currently authorized to perform the tests. No other tests are genuine or guaranteed to provide accurate results.*
- Consumers are purchasing large amounts of products and reselling them at higher prices. *These products may be expired, of lower quality and increase your health risks.*
- Fraudsters are creating fraudulent and deceptive online ads offering cleaning products, hand sanitizers and other items in high demand.
- Fraudsters are sending phishing, spear phishing and other malicious email campaigns that capitalize on the public's fears about COVID-19
- Fraudsters have been going door-to-door offering fake decontamination services.
- The FTC & FDA (USA) have warned several companies selling fraudulent products that claim to treat or prevent the disease. *No such products have been approved. The unapproved drugs threaten public health and violate federal laws.*
- Fraudsters posing as police have been imposing on-the-spot fines to consumers wearing masks. They claim that wearing a mask in public goes against a full-face veil law. *It is not illegal to wear a mask for health reasons.*
- Fraudsters may urge you to invest in hot new stocks related to the disease.
- Fraudsters are sending phishing, spear phishing and other malicious email campaigns that capitalize on the public's fears about Covid-19.
- Fraudsters are creating fraudulent and deceptive online ads offering cleaning products, hand sanitizers and other items in high demand.

Warning Signs – How to Protect Yourself

- Beware of false or misleading information.
- Find the latest information available from Public Health Agency of Canada at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html> or the World Health Organization at: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>
- Contact your insurance provider to answer any health insurance questions.
- Beware of high-priced or low-quality products.
- Beware of unsolicited medical advisory emails with links or attachments. Fraudsters may spoof the information of government and health care organizations.
- Beware of miracle cures, herbal remedies and other questionable offers (e.g. vaccinations, fasters tests, etc).
- Beware of unauthorized or fraudulent charities requesting money for victims or research. You should never be pressured into making a donation. Verify that a charity is registered at: https://apps.cra-arc.gc.ca/ebci/hacc/srch/pub/dsplyBscSrch?request_locale=en

If you think you or someone you know has been a victim of fraud, please contact the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre at 1-888-495-8501 or report online at www.antifraudcentre.ca.

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