Coronavirus Scams

Tips from the FTC

ftc.gov/coronavirus

Source: Federal Trade Commission | FTC.gov
Welcome

Kerry O’Brien
Assistant Director
Federal Trade Commission
Western Region San Francisco
UDAP

unfair or deceptive acts or practices
FTC Enforcement Authority

- CAN SPAM Act
- Fair Debt Collection Practices Act
- Consumer Leasing Act
- Fair Credit Reporting Act
- Credit Repair Organizations Act
Some of the rules issued by the FTC include:

- The Telemarketing Sales Rule
- The Franchise and Business Opp. Rule
- The Funeral Rule
- The Care Labeling Rule
- The Mail Order Rule
Commissioners

Joseph Simons
Chairman

Christine S. Wilson
Commissioner

Noah Phillips
Commissioner

Rohit Chopra
Commissioner

Rebecca K. Slaughter
Commissioner
Consumer Protection Mission

LAW ENFORCEMENT

CONSUMER EDUCATION

BUSINESS GUIDANCE
TOP 5 REDRESS JUDGMENTS*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MoneyGram International Inc.</td>
<td>$125 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping America Group</td>
<td>$31 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vantage Point Services</td>
<td>$26.96 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Management Services</td>
<td>$23.1 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Saguaro Marketing LLC (Max Results Marketing)</td>
<td>$11.9 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOP 5 CIVIL PENALTY CASES*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RealPage, Inc.</td>
<td>$3 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help The Vets, Inc.</td>
<td>$1.82 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vtech Electronics Limited</td>
<td>$650,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolan/Madison Square Garden</td>
<td>$600,810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporation For Character (Feature Films for Families, Inc.)</td>
<td>$467,725</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Includes refund programs administered by FTC defendants and monitored by the FTC.

2,266,633 consumers received $439 MILLION in redress directly from the FTC

ADDITIONAL REDRESS ADMINISTERED BY OTHERS

NEW REDRESS & DISGORGEMENT AWARDS*

CIVIL PENALTIES AWARDED*

$1.365 billion

$254.03 million

$7.16 million
Scammers follow the headlines

- As headlines change, so will the scams
- Help the FTC and law enforcement partners know what you’re seeing
  - Report scams to [ftc.gov/complaint](http://ftc.gov/complaint)
Treatments & cures

- Vaccine offers
- Test kit offers
- Miracle cures
- Medicare-related scams
Email/text scams & malicious websites

- Phishing emails & texts
  - Get your money
  - Get your information
  - Links to malware sites
- Malicious websites
  - Lots of domains including “Coronavirus”
  - Stick with known, trusted sites
- Don’t click links from sources you don’t know

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Re: SAFTY CORONA VIRUS AWARENESS WHO

Dear Sir,

Go through the attached document on safety measures regarding the spreading of coronavirus.

Click on the button below to download

Saftey measures

Symptoms common symptoms include fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties.

Regards,

Dr. Stella Changong
Specialist in health-virus advisery

FAKE
Robocalls

- Health-related calls
  - Cures! Prevention! Test kits! Telemedicine! Health insurance!
- Cleaning supplies
- Social Security Administration scams
- Mortgage relief scams
- Student loan debt relief scams
- More every day
- Report to [ftc.gov/complaint](http://ftc.gov/complaint)
Economic impact payment scams

- The government will not ask you to pay up front to get any money
- The government will not ask for your SSN, bank account, or credit card number
- The government will not call or text you to ask for money or information
Fake charities

- Often appear with crises
- Before you give: do your homework
- If you give, never pay by cash, gift card or money transfer.
- [ftc.gov/charity](http://ftc.gov/charity)
Misinformation & rumors

Ask yourself these 3 questions:

- Who is this message from?
- What do they want me to do?
- What is the evidence behind this message?

usa.gov/coronavirus
The FTC’s law enforcement

The FTC has sent warning letters to:

- The makers of teas, essential oils, colloidal silver, saunas, vitamins, pulsed electromagnetic field devices, licorice, and many other products
  - Said their products would help prevent the Coronavirus
  - BUT: No evidence to back up claims
- VoIP providers who helped illegal telemarketers and robocallers push products related to the Coronavirus
- MLM business “opportunities” with Coronavirus cure claims
The FTC’s law enforcement

The FTC has filed cases against:

- A company calling itself “SBA Loan Program”
  - FTC says it had no affiliation with the Small Business Administration
- A company called “Whole Leaf”
  - Claimed its product could treat COVID-19 AND cancer
  - Had no proof to back either claim
- A company called “Traffic Jam Events”
  - Claimed that consumers could obtain COVID-19 stimulus checks in person.
Traffic Jam Events
Complaint Data Visualizations
Consumer education for active older adults – www.ftc.gov/PassItOn

Respecting a lifetime of experience

Encouraging sharing of information on:

- Identity theft
- Unwanted calls
- Health care scams
- Money mule scams
- “You’ve won” scams
- Home repair scams
- Charity fraud

- Imposter scams
  - Tech support scams
  - IRS imposter scams
  - Online dating scams
  - Grandkid scams
Visit ftc.gov/PassItOn
You’ll find:

- Articles
- Bookmarks
- Activities
- PowerPoint presentations
- Videos

Grandkid Scams

Here’s how they work:
You get a call “Grandma, I need money for bail.” Or money for a medical bill. Or some other kind of trouble. The caller says it's urgent — and tells you to keep it a secret.

But is the caller who you think it is? Scammers are good at pretending to be someone they’re not. They can be convincing; sometimes using information from social networking sites, or hacking into your loved one’s email account, to make it seem more real. And they’ll pressure you to send money before you have time to think.

Here’s what you can do:
1. Stop. Check it out. Look up your grandkid's phone number yourself, or call another family member.
2. Pass this information on to a friend. You may not have gotten one of these calls, but chances are you know someone who will get one — if they haven’t already.
Stay informed

- Get the FTC’s Consumer Alerts: ftc.gov/subscribe
- Report scams or questionable claims: ftc.gov/complaint
- Know the latest on the Coronavirus
  - Health info: www.coronavirus.gov
  - COVID-19 Scams: ftc.gov/coronavirus/scams
  - Federal gov’t response: usa.gov/coronavirus
Questions?

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