

NEWS RELEASE

Released by: Gordon J. MacDonald, Attorney General

Subject: Attorney General's COVID-19 Scam Alert: Stimulus Payments

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Concord, NH -- Attorney General Gordon J. MacDonald is warning about a wave of COVID-19 related scams surrounding federal stimulus payments. These scams target consumer vulnerability by attempting to capitalize on the anxiety naturally arising from current events.

The public should always be vigilant with respect to potential scams. However, during these challenging times, heightened awareness is essential. The Attorney General urges the public to use common sense and caution to protect against scammers.

Stimulus Payment Scams

The United States Congress recently passed a large COVID-19 relief and stimulus package that promises to provide financial relief to many Americans. Scammers have recently attempted to use the promise and anticipation of stimulus payments to acquire personal identifying information [PII] from unsuspecting victims.

In a recent example of how scammers are trying to use the anticipation of stimulus payments to collect PII, emails that appeared to be from the United States Treasury Department were sent by scammers claiming that the recipient was selected as one of the first to receive a stimulus payment. The phony email requested that the recipient provide PII including phone number, date of birth and profession in order to receive a stimulus payment.

What you should know:

- The Internal Revenue Service recently released guidance informing the public that most people do not need to take any action in order to receive stimulus payments.
- Government agencies are **NOT** sending out emails asking for personal information in order to receive funds or other pandemic relief opportunities.

How to protect yourself:

- Any request via a phone call, text message or email for personal identifying information, or any other information as a prerequisite for receiving a stimulus payment should be heavily scrutinized.
- **Do not engage** with callers or emails from unrecognized sources.

- Do your homework, ask questions and use the IRS website for accurate information:
<https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/economic-impact-payments-what-you-need-to-know>
- New Hampshire people who receive requests for information in exchange for a stimulus payment should contact the Consumer Protection and Antitrust Bureau of the Attorney General's Office.

Stay Informed:

- For up-to-date information about the COVID-19 outbreak in New Hampshire visit:
www.nh.gov/covid19
- For more information about Scams and how to protect yourself, visit:
www.doj.nh.gov/covid-19-scams/

Contact the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Hotline to report a scam:

- Phone: 1-888-468-4454
- Email: DOJ-CPB@doj.nh.gov
- Website: www.doj.nh.gov/consumer/complaints/

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