

## Privacy Tip #256 – COVID-19 Scams Continue to Plague U.S. Public

Article By:

Linn F. Freedman

---

It has been widely reported that hackers are taking advantage of the pandemic to perpetrate scams and frauds. We have seen attacks against workers of companies through phishing emails that include an attachment or link offering information or access to specialized treatment for COVID-19 to lure people to click on them. Once they click on the link or attachment, the attacker infects the system with malware or ransomware. Cyber criminals know that people are concerned about the coronavirus and looking for more information to protect themselves and their family members, and they also are preying on the distraction of working from home.

It has become such a problem that the Department of Justice (DOJ) instructed the National Center for Disaster Fraud (NCDF) to gather coronavirus-related complaints from the public and assist with information sharing about scams. The NCDF has received more than 76,000 tips on COVID-19 related wrongdoing, and the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center has received more than 20,000 tips about suspicious websites and media postings. This doesn't include the successful phishing campaigns using COVID-19-related information to trick people into clicking on malicious links or attachments.

The United States Attorney's Office for the Western District of Louisiana issued a [reminder](#) this week for "members of the public to be vigilant against fraudsters who are using the COVID-19 pandemic to exploit American consumers and organizations...In particular, the department is warning the public about scams perpetrated through websites, social media, emails, robocalls, and other means that peddle fake COVID-19 vaccines, tests, treatments, and protective equipment, and also about criminals that fabricate businesses and steal identities in order to defraud federal relief programs and state unemployment programs."

In addition, the notice states "Moving forward, the department also is concerned about, and will aim to deter and prevent, attempts by wrongdoers to prey upon potential victims by leveraging news about anticipated approval of a COVID-19 vaccine or about the potential enactment of new disaster relief bills that extend or expand upon CARES Act relief."

The notice is a good reminder to each of us personally as well as employees of the continued threat and to need to remain vigilant to combat these scams. The DOJ "encourages the public to continue to report wrongdoing relating to the pandemic to the NCDF and to remain vigilant against bad actors

looking to exploit this national emergency.”

Copyright © 2025 Robinson & Cole LLP. All rights reserved.

---

National Law Review, Volume X, Number 296

Source URL: <https://natlawreview.com/article/privacy-tip-256-covid-19-scams-continue-to-plague-us-public>