

Did someone call, text, or email you about the stimulus check? It's probably a scam

RICHMOND, Va. (WSET) -- Attorney General Mark R. Herring issued a consumer alert Friday urging Virginians to be wary of scammers trying to get personal information as part of a new federal [stimulus payment](#) scam.

He said there are reports of scammers using the news that, as part of the federal stimulus package, the government will be sending one-time payments to millions of Virginians and Americans as an opportunity to try and steal personal information.

"You should never give your personal information to anyone over the phone, email, or a text message unless you are absolutely sure that you know the identity of the person requesting it," said Attorney General Herring. "Unfortunately, in times of uncertainty or crisis unscrupulous people will try and find new ways to take money from hardworking Virginians. If you or anyone you know has been a victim of a scam like this please reach out to my Consumer Protection Section."



Mark Herring ✓
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*** CONSUMER ALERT *** Look out for scammers who are using the [#COVID19](#) federal stimulus package as a way to try and take money from hardworking Virginians. Remember to NEVER give your personal information out to someone unless you are absolutely sure you who they are.

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Herring said if you get an email, text or phone call about these stimulus checks from someone purporting to be with the government to not give them personal information.

These phishing scams will likely ask for things like bank account information under the guise of direct depositing money from the stimulus package into your bank account.

Also, remember that the government will not ask you to pay any money up front to get a stimulus check. So if someone asks you to pay something, it's a scam.

Below are some additional tips to avoid becoming a victim of a government impostor scam:

- Don't give the caller any of your financial or other personal information – Never give out or confirm financial or other sensitive information, including your bank account, credit card, or Social Security number, unless you know exactly who you're dealing with. Scammers can use your information to commit identity theft. If you get a call about a debt that may be legitimate — but you think the collector may not be — contact the company to which the caller claims you owe money to inquire about the call.
- Don't trust a name or number – Scammers use official-sounding names, titles, and organizations to make you trust them. To make the call seem legitimate, scammers also use internet technology to disguise their area code or generate a fake name on caller ID. So even though it may look like they're calling locally or somewhere in the United States, they could be calling from anywhere in the world.
- Never wire money or send cash or a pre-paid card – These transactions are just like sending someone cash! Once your money is gone, you can't trace it or get it back.

Join the National Do Not Call Registry and don't answer numbers you don't know - This won't stop scammers from calling but it should make you skeptical of calls you get from out of the blue. Most legitimate sales people generally honor the Do Not Call list.

Putting your number on the list helps to "screen" your calls for legitimacy and reduce the number of legitimate telemarketing calls you get.