

Beware of Stimulus Payment and Corona Vaccine Scams

With the second round of stimulus checks in process of being delivered and the Corona virus vaccine being administered to first line defenders and those living in group settings, once again scams regarding them are on the rise. Here are some warnings, gathered from a variety of sources, that you should take note of:

Second Round Stimulus Scams

1. Be aware of offers to help you get the stimulus check quicker, especially if there is a “fee” involved. You do not need to apply or pay anything to get your stimulus funds. (Always be wary of anyone asking for an online payment to be made in gift cards, prepaid debit cards, etc.) Also, at this time you will see offers and ads for “cash advance” loans with high interest rates.
2. Do not respond to any “urgent” request to verify personal information. The IRS will never call, text, or email you to verify information!
3. Bogus check scam. This is for people who do not use direct deposit for their stimulus checks. When you receive your check in the mail, take care that it is real! Scammers often make up the name of agencies. If you deposit a bogus check, the scammers may call and tell you the amount is incorrect and you need to return some of the funds. If you’re to repay using gift cards or pre-paid cards, beware!

If you think your personal information may have been compromised, you can go to the website [identitytheft.gov](https://www.identitytheft.gov) for help in developing a recovery plan.

You can check the IRS Get My Payment page to keep track of the status of your payment*.

*Up to \$600 per individual, including dependent children under age 17, if you earned less than \$75,000 (\$150,000 for those married filing jointly) in 2019. Payments phase out if you earned more than that, stopping completely for those with adjusted gross incomes of \$87,500 or more (\$174,000 for married couples).

Corona Virus Vaccine Scams

State and federal officials want the public to stay vigilant about COVID-19 scams related to vaccines, treatments, test kits, and clinical trials. Here are five points the public should understand:

1. **People should turn to trusted sources—their doctor or local health department—for guidance.**
2. **People should not buy any corona virus vaccine or treatment on the internet or from an online pharmacy.**
3. **Doses of the vaccine will be provided to patients at no cost. Providers may charge an administration fee and have that fee reimbursed by private and public insurance companies.**
4. **People should not respond to any solicitations about the vaccine. “Fraudsters are using telemarketing calls, text messages, social media platforms and door-to-door visits to perpetrate COVID-19 related scams.”**
5. **People should not give cash or any other form of payment to suspicious callers, nor should they divulge personal, medical, or financial information.**

This information is from an online article by Katherine Skiba, AARP, updated Dec. 15, 2020