Warning: Coronavirus Scams and Other Scams (Tricks) or Fraud

Coronavirus Scams: Scammers are taking advantage of the fear and uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 coronavirus from phishing to false information to fake charities and “cures”. It is also important to continue to watch out for other fraudulent phone calls and emails too.

The criminals who try to deceive people over the phone or the internet are often very convincing, so it's important to be careful so that you don't lose your money or provide personal information* to people who should not have it.

Read the warnings below so that you will be aware of some common scams. The U-M Police Department (734-763-1131; dpss-safety-security@umich.edu) can help you decide if a call (or email) is actually a scam, and they are always open so you can call anytime. Also, the University of California, Davis prepared a video about common scams. Some of the information is specific to UC-Davis, but some of it would apply to scams here in Michigan too.

Call for advice BEFORE sending money or giving out personal information.*

Remember:

• Your home country consulate will not call you and ask you to transfer money. They also won’t call you and ask you for your ID or bank account information, or tell you that they are transferring the call to “Interpol” or to the police. Don’t trust caller ID. This is a scam.
• In a very common scam, you will be told that a package addresses to you is connected to a criminal case, but if you transfer money to a particular bank account, the police will resolve the case. What will actually happen is that criminals will steal your money.
• U.S. government agencies such as the IRS (Internal Revenue Service) or DHS (Department of Homeland Security) will not call you and ask for money, or threaten to have the FBI arrest you. They will never ask for payment with iTunes cards or other gift cards. This is a clear sign of a scam.
• Even though the caller may sound very real and very threatening, do not be fooled. If an unknown caller threatens you or makes you uncomfortable, just end the call and contact DPSS for advice.

More information about scams and fraud:

• ITS Scams and Fraud Page
• Immigration and Tax related Scam Alerts from US Government sources
• International Center Scam Warning Page
* Personal information includes your date of birth and place of birth, your social security number if you have one, personal financial information such as bank account or credit card numbers, etc.

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Links
[1] https://safecomputing.umich.edu/be-aware/scams/coronavirus
[2] mailto:dpss-safety-security@umich.edu
[3] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I_2EjZfFli4
[4] https://www.dpss.umich.edu/