

Stay Safe, Avoid Scams

Unfortunately, some people are trying to take advantage of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak to make money and steal personal information. To keep you and your family safe, we have compiled a list of existing scams, with information on how to protect yourself.

What types of scams have been reported?



"Free" Government Grants/Relief Checks

Messages sent via social media, over the phone or texts, they require a personal information be given out or a "small processing fee." No government agency will reach out to you asking for personal information or money. If you are unsure about a recent call/text/message, visit the Better Business Bureau's Scam Tracker at: www.bbb.org/scamtracker



Online Ads/Emails - Don't Click That Link

If you see a social media message, online popup, or email from an unknown email address claiming to have information on COVID-19, don't click it. Visit reputable sources you trust like the CDC or WHO websites. You can also visit fortbendseniors.org for information and reputable links.



COVID-19 Vaccinations

No vaccine currently exists for this virus. Do not provide personal information, money, or Medicare information to anyone who calls/messages to say they can reserve you a vaccination dose.



Specials on Cleaning Services

Be wary of any phone calls or messages offering special deals for seniors, to clean and sanitize your homes. NEVER give pre-payment over the phone or online. Visit the Better Business Bureau before hiring any cleaning services for your home.



Avoid Charity Scams

If someone calls/messages claiming to help COVID-19 victims and their families, or needing money to develop a vaccine, do not respond. If you want to donate to a charity during the virus outbreak, please give to a well-known local charity. Visit guidestar.org for reputable charities in your area.



Products that Stop/Prevent the Virus

No scientific evidence shows any products prevent the coronavirus. As of 3/9/20, the FTC and FDA issued warnings against 7 companies claiming they treated or prevented the virus. Products such as teas, essential oils, or colloidal silver will not help in any way - do not purchase these items.



No COVID-19/Coronavirus Testing Door to Door

If someone visits your home claiming to be from the Red Cross, CDC or other org, (or wearing hazmat suits/masks) do not let them in. They will offer to provide a COVID-19 test (for a fee) or check your home for signs of the virus. Pre-scheduled drive-thru testing or testing at a hospital are the only options right now. If these folks ask for payment, ask them to leave - NO reputable organization is going door to door and asking for payment for COVID-19 testing or checking homes.



If you feel you were a victim of a scam, or someone attempted to scam you, contact your local police department, or contact the Sheriff's Office to report it.

Fort Bend County Sheriff
281-341-4665

Waller County Sheriff
979-826-8282



AARP's Fraud Watch Network can help with scams. Visit their website to sign up for "watchdog alerts," view a scam-tracking map, or call their toll-free fraud helpline at 877-908-3360.

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I think someone is trying to scam me. What should I do?

The Department of Justice recommends that Americans take the following precautionary measures to protect themselves from known and emerging scams related to COVID-19:

- Independently verify the identity of any company, charity, or individual that contacts you regarding COVID-19. (FBS recommends Better Business Bureau or Guidestar to check businesses or charities)
- Check the websites and email addresses offering information, products, or services related to COVID-19. Be aware that scammers often employ addresses that differ only slightly from those belonging to the entities they are impersonating. For example, they might use "cdc.com" or "cdc.org" instead of "cdc.gov," or "-gov" instead of ".gov."
- Be wary of unsolicited emails offering information, supplies, or treatment for COVID-19 or requesting your personal information for medical purposes. Legitimate health authorities will not contact the general public this way.
- Do not click on links or open email attachments from unknown or unverified sources. Doing so could download a virus onto your computer or device.
- Ignore offers for a COVID-19 vaccine, cure, or treatment. Remember, if a vaccine becomes available, you won't hear about it for the first time through an email, online ad, or unsolicited sales pitch.
- Check online reviews of any company offering COVID-19 products or supplies. Avoid companies whose customers have complained about not receiving items.
- Research any charities or crowdfunding sites soliciting donations in connection with COVID-19 before giving any donation. Remember, an organization may not be legitimate even if it uses words like "CDC" or "government" in its name or has reputable looking seals or logos on its materials.
- Be wary of any business, charity, or individual requesting payments or donations in cash, by wire transfer, gift card, or through the mail. Don't send money through any of these channels.
- Be cautious of "investment opportunities" tied to COVID-19, especially those based on claims that a small company's products or services can help stop the virus. If you decide to invest, carefully research the investment beforehand.



I have a question. Who can I contact?



For questions on Meals on Wheels deliveries, call Fort Bend Seniors at 281-633-7049. Staff are working remotely and can answer/return your calls M-F from 8:00am-5:00pm.

For questions about COVID-19 in Fort Bend County, call Fort Bend County Health & Human Services at 281-633-7795. The number is staffed M-F from 8:00am-8:00pm and weekends from 10:00am to 2:00pm.

FBS is sending emergency alerts as needed during the virus outbreak.

If you have not received an email, phone message, and/or text message from us about the coronavirus outbreak, please call us at 281-633-7049. All clients and their family members should be signed up to receive emergency alerts from FBS.



Find more information online at:

CDC: www.cdc.gov/

Fort Bend County Health & Human Services: www.fbchealth.org/ncov

Fort Bend Seniors: www.fortbendseniors.org

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