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Don't Let Thieves Snatch Your COVID-19 Stimulus Money

(COLUMBUS, Ohio) — Attorney General Dave Yost today urged Ohioans to watch out for thieves as stimulus payments arrive from the federal government.

"Thieves are drooling at the thought of getting their hands on your stimulus money," Yost said. "Use these tips to send them home with nothing but the bitter taste of defeat."

Under the plan, the federal government will provide stimulus checks under these general guidelines (some exceptions apply):

- \$1,200 payment to individual taxpayers making under \$75,000.
- \$2,400 payment for married couples filing jointly making under \$150,000 combined.
- An additional \$500 per qualifying child under the age of 17.

Yost offered these tips to help Ohioans avoid scams related to the stimulus payments:

- Know that you don't have to sign up to get a stimulus payment. For most consumers, the IRS will use information from prior tax returns to calculate payment.
- Don't fall for scams claiming you need to pay money to receive your stimulus payment. The government will not ask for any upfront payment.
- Watch out for anyone telling you they can get you an instant payment or speed up the process. Do not provide personal information or pay a "processing fee" to supposedly receive a quicker payment. According to the government, payments through direct deposit could go out in three weeks, but it may be longer, especially if you are expecting a paper check.
- Don't click on links or download attachments unless you have verified the source and know it is legitimate. Doing so could infect your devices with malicious software designed to steal your personal information or lock your computer until you pay a ransom.
- The government will not call you asking for Social Security, credit card or bank account numbers. Also, do not disclose your PayPal information – no PayPal account is necessary to receive your stimulus payment. All payments will be through direct deposit to a bank account or paper check.
- If you receive a stimulus check and it is for an odd amount of money (i.e. \$1499.50) or if it states you need to verify the check online or over the phone, it's a scam.
- You should get a paper notice in the mail a couple weeks after your payment is sent, letting you know where it was sent and when. If you can't locate the payment at that point, call the IRS at a legitimate phone number.

For more information, consumers should visit the [IRS website](#) and other legitimate government agency websites and stay tuned for updates from reliable news sources.

Consumers who suspect an unfair or deceptive sales practice should contact the Ohio Attorney General's Office at www.OhioProtects.org or 800-282-0515.

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