

# BUSINESSSAFE

*BusinessSafe is designed to aid businesses in protecting the safety and well-being of Florida's residents and visitors from threats. BusinessSafe provides private sector partners with open source information, analysis and resources to help protect their businesses and communities.*

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## BusinessSafe Threat Topic: COVID-19 Related Scams

Criminal actors have conducted numerous scam campaigns exploiting the COVID-19 pandemic. Scams that are currently impacting consumers include but are not limited to romance scams, unemployment/job scams, robocalls, and contact tracing scams.

**Romance scams occur regularly but may increase amid the COVID-19 pandemic.** Romance scams are often conducted via dating apps or social media platforms and involve scammers using fake profiles to gain the trust and affection of unsuspecting victims. These criminal actors then exploit the victim's trust by asking them for money or using them to funnel funds. With many people at home for extended periods of time, criminal actors may increasingly use romance scams for financial gain.

- [Online Romance Scam Lands Criminal Enterprise Thousands in COVID-19 Cash, per Federal Authorities](#)
- [Ohio Attorney General States More Ohioans are Reporting Losing Money in Romance Scams During the Pandemic as Opposed to the Same Time Last Year](#)

**Unemployment and job-related scams continue to be a concern as scammers seek to take advantage of those looking for new opportunities amid the pandemic.** Some criminal actors have taken advantage of federal loan programs, filed false unemployment claims, submitted fraudulent claims on behalf of others, or posted fake job advertisements to attempt to gain individuals' personal identifying information (PII). PII includes things such as names, date of birth, address or social security number.

- [Fake Job Scam Ads are Appearing Online and Convince People to Send Money or Cash Counterfeit Checks](#)

**COVID-19 testing scams and associated robocalls have continued to impact victims throughout the pandemic.** Authorities in Florida have released warnings about COVID-19 related robocalls for specific products or benefits used to allegedly cure the virus. Criminal actors have also reportedly contacted individuals via telephone about fraudulent contact tracing to obtain personal information from victims.

- [State Leaders Warn of Fake COVID-19 Contact Tracing Calls](#)



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### **Tips to Protect Yourself from COVID-19 Related Scams:**

- If you believe you have been victimized by a COVID-19 related scam, you can report it to the Florida Office of the Attorney General at 1-866-9NO-SCAM or [MyFloridaLegal.com](https://www.myfloridalegal.com). COVID-19 related crimes can also be reported to local law enforcement agencies. For more information on other COVID-19 scams targeting consumers, please visit the [Florida Office of Attorney General, Research/Report a Scam Page](#).
- Be cautious when communicating with unknown individuals, businesses, or organizations online. Be on the lookout for people or organizations making suspicious requests for money, and research companies before accepting a job offer. Online scams can be reported to the [Internet Crime Complaint Center](#).
- Report robocall scams to the [Federal Trade Commission \(FTC\)](#). The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) also maintains a Do Not Call list for residents. To file a do not call complaint with FDACS or to subscribe to this service, visit the [website](#) or call 1-800-HELP-FLA.
- The Florida Department of Health (DOH) provides information about [contact tracing](#). If you receive a call from the DOH (either legitimate or fraudulent) it is recommended that you ask follow up questions and avoid giving out sensitive information.

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