

AVOIDING SCAMS



Scammers, fraudsters, and other criminals are taking advantage of rapidly changing data and facts associated with world events. Government agencies, corporations, and news outlets continue to warn individuals to be mindful of increased fraudulent activities during these uncertain times.

These scams, which can be sent via email, text message, and social media claim to sell products, ask for charitable donations, or reference government aid packages. These messages appear to be legitimate in nature but seek to fraudulently obtain personal information, financial gain, and create panic.

Use these tips to identify and avoid scams:

- **Do your homework prior to donating to charities or crowdfunding sites.** Confirm the validity of the organization as fraudsters are now advertising fake charities. Do not let anyone rush you into a donation, particularly those who ask for cash, gift cards, or wiring of funds.
- **Do not click on links or open attachments from sources you do not know.** Cybercriminals are using today's headlines as a tactic to spread computer viruses and steal information. Do not provide personal information, payment information or sensitive workplace information via suspicious email addresses.
- **Be suspicious of urgent demands and emergency requests.** The safety of you and your family is the top priority. Do not fall for scammers threatening fees or fines in exchange for financial gain.
- **If it sounds too good to be true, it likely is.** Many individuals have begun to receive robo-calls and social media requests for social security numbers, banking information, and gift cards. Scammers make promises in exchange for payment and sensitive information.
- **Be mindful of scammers using government aid packages for criminal gain.** The government will not request payment through these scamming avenues, nor will anyone reach out requesting personally sensitive information in exchange for financial support.
- **Obtain your news from a trusted source.** Be mindful of text message scams, social media polls and fraudulent email accounts sharing false information to create panic. Before acting on information, review its source and check a trusted outlet to confirm its validity.

When in doubt, ask a coworker, family member, or friend for their opinion. Two sets of eyes are better than one. If you believe you have fallen victim of a scam, call your local police at their non-emergency number and consider reporting to the FBI's IC3 Internet Crime Database.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our office.



253.759.0100 | advisor@westgatecapital.com | westgatecapital.com