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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 6th, 2021
#21-47

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HOLIDAY SCAM WARNING FROM THE TENNESSEE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE

Nashville- The Division of Consumer Affairs (DCA) in the Tennessee Attorney General's Office is urging consumers to beware of scammers looking to steal money and personal information over the holidays.

These are the most common scams reported to the Attorney General's Office this fall:

Online Purchase Scams –Websites, social media advertisements, and marketplace postings entice purchasers with popular products at bargain prices. However, the products are either never received or are inferior to what was advertised.

Remodeling Contractor Scams –Payment is collected but the work is never done, and the “contractor” disappears.

Online Pet Purchase Scam –The “seller” sends pictures of animals copied from legitimate breeder sites. After collecting payment, the “seller” makes excuses about delays and charges extra fees.

Counterfeit Check Scam – A transaction in which a payment by check turns out to be more than the price of the item. The seller is asked to provide the overage in the form of gift cards. The check is fake, and the seller is indebted to the bank and loses money paid through the gift cards.

Tech Support Scams –Pop up messages with a number or link to get help for a computer problem. Scammers ask for payment in the form of gift cards to fix the issue or attempt to access personal information or download malware. Never pay over-the-phone or online for tech support. Contact the manufacturer directly.

To avoid scams, look for the red flags:

PRETENDING to be official. Scammers claim to be with an organization, business, utility, or charity that sounds official. They may use technology to change or “spoof” the phone number that appears on your device.

PROBLEM or PRIZE. You're in trouble with the government, you owe money, you won a government grant, someone in your family had an emergency, or there's a virus on your computer.

PRESSURE to act immediately. Pressure tactics include threats of arrest, taking away your driver's or business license, and deportation.



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PAY in a specific way. Insisting on payment through a money transfer company or a gift card.

Remember these preventative measures:

STOP and talk to someone you trust. Talking about it could help you realize it's a scam.

BLOCK unwanted calls and text messages. Check your phone carrier's options. Don't recognize the number? Let it go to voicemail. Answering or pressing 1 can lead to more calls.

DON'T provide personal or financial information. Legitimate organizations won't ask for Social Security, bank account, or credit card numbers.

RESIST the pressure to act immediately. Legitimate businesses give you time to decide.

CONSIDER your payment method when shopping online. Credit cards have significant fraud protection.

SIGN UP for free scam alerts. Get news about the latest scams and important advice from the Federal Trade Commission sent right to your inbox by visiting www.ftc.gov/scams.

RESEARCH. Search online for the company or product with words like "review," "complaint" or "scam."

- Contact the Better Business Bureau: www.bbb.org
- Verify whether a contractor is licensed: www.verify.tn.gov.
- Check for previous complaints by calling the Tennessee Board for Licensing Contractors at 800-544-7693 or Contractors.Home-Improvement@TN.Gov.

For more scam-fighting resources, visit the Division of Consumer Affairs website at www.tn.gov/consumer. You can also check which specific scams are being reported in your local area by accessing the [Better Business Bureau's Scam Tracker](#).

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