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SCAMMERS STILL LOOKING TO HURT SOUTH CAROLINIANS DURING CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

S.C. Law Enforcement Division Chief would like to remind everyone that as we continue to make our way through this coronavirus pandemic, scammers will continue to develop ways to take advantage of the situation.

Criminals are very opportunistic and they are exploiting this pandemic to steal people's money. Most targeted are the elderly, especially those separated from family. Criminals see a vulnerable population out there that they can prey upon. The best protection from becoming a victim is being informed.

"We would like to stop fraud before it happens and that starts by being aware, informed and vigilant," says SLED Chief Mark Keel. "We want to remind every South Carolinian to watch for scams and exercise caution."

Examples of COVID-19 fraud include: economic impact scams, supply scams, provider scams, charity scams, phishing scams, mobile app scams, investment scams, price gouging and unemployment fraud.

According to the FBI, one of the most prevalent schemes out there is government impersonators. Criminals are reaching out to people through social media, emails, or phone calls pretending to be from the government.

"If you have been a victim or you suspect someone has attempted to defraud you or a family member, please report it," says Keel. "Information you provide may help stop a criminal's scheme before any other South Carolinian is potentially hurt."

Individuals who suspect financial exploitation should contact their local law enforcement.

More information about combatting coronavirus fraud can also be found on the [U.S. Department of Justice](#) or [FBI](#) websites.

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