Corona Virus Scam Alert

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Wealth By Design

Scam Alert

With all of the uncertainty and fear going on in our world, one would think, that we as human beings, would band together and show some kindness and compassion. Pay it forward, wave or smile, heck, even the IRS is trying to give people money instead of take it these days. There are however, always those bad apples that try to take advantage of a terrible situation. We would like to inform you of possible technological threats and give ideas on how to avoid them.

Online scams have been a thing for at least the last twenty to thirty years. They used to be fairly obvious and not very well done. These days, the hackers have become much better at what they do so we need to stay ever vigilant and aware. Scams are coming mainly via email and now even through text alerts. Here are some of the ways that scammers are gaining information:

- Creating fake charities, please do your due diligence to make sure that where you donate is a legitimate organization. Some of the names of the fake charities have come very close to real charities. Be extra careful about donating online.
- Creating "Coronavirus Antivirus software". No, this is not an antidote to the virus, but they do claim to help protect from scammers, such as themselves. This is not a real thing, be on the lookout for that.
- 2020 census text asking for personal information, if you fill out an application or enter in some information, you will get your stimulus check faster. This is not true; the Census does not have anything to do with your stimulus check.
- Free Covid-19 test if you fill out the attached application. Once the application is opened, it is either a virus attached, or it asks for personal information for a fraudulent company.
- White House instruction email for the Coronavirus. Techie people are saying that this one is fairly advanced. The attachment actually brings you to a website that looks like an official website with the White House in the background. However, the attachment is not going to a government agency.

These are just a few examples of things to look for before opening or replying to emails or texts.

Some tips/knowledge on how to avoid falling prey to these online predators:

- The IRS will never send you a notice via email or text. Notifications always come via a letter.
- The IRS will never send threatening voicemails, emails or texts. If you feel uncomfortable with how someone is corresponding with you via a notice, please contact your accountant to ask questions on legitimacy.
- Check the website or email address and where it came from. Websites/emails ending in .exe or .scr, probably are not sincere.
- Also, check for spelling/grammar errors. Even though the hackers are more advanced, there are still critical misspellings and wording issues that could help give them away or at least be a red flag.

If you have any questions regarding a notice or concerns about an email regarding tax issues, feel free to give us a call and as always stay aware and stay safe.

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