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OFFICE OF
ATTORNEY GENERAL
ASHLEY MOODY
— Stronger, Safer Florida —

Attorney General Ashley Moody News Release



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody is issuing a Consumer Alert highlighting schemes associated with the holiday season. The [National Retail Federation predicts](#) that overall spending during the holidays is expected to total a record-breaking \$950 million. Schemers know spending increases during the holidays and will craft ways to target consumers.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “It’s a busy time of year for shoppers, retailers and delivery companies as millions of gifts are sold, shipped and delivered. It’s also a busy season for scammers concocting schemes to exploit the holiday demand. Today, I am releasing the 12 Schemes of Christmas Consumer Alert to help Floridians identify and avoid scams they could encounter during this busy holiday shopping season.”

Attorney General Moody lists 12 schemes Floridians should be wary of during the holiday season and beyond:

- [Gift Card Schemes](#): Some schemers reveal and record codes from gift cards in stores, stealing the value of the card once it is purchased and activated.
- [Fraudulent Charities](#): Deceptive and phony online fundraising campaigns may be posted on crowdsourcing platforms. Ensure legitimacy by researching an organization on [CharityNavigator.org](#) before giving.
- [Porch Pirates](#): If a mailbox shows signs of being tampered with or packages are missing from a consumer's front door, this may be a sign of delivery theft. Control delivery times or purchase a secure mailbox to avoid theft.
- [Travel Scams](#): Scammers may make fake postings offering vacation rental properties or travel deals that are too good to be true, like holiday pricing and packages.

- [Fake Gift Exchanges](#): Fraudulent online holiday gift exchange events are advertised on social media with promises of multiple gifts after paying it forward. Oftentimes, this is a pyramid scheme in disguise.
- [Phishing Messages](#): Phishing messages are a year-round attack from schemers, but messages may be tailored around the holiday season. Emails may appear to originate from a trusted merchant, but instead originate from a schemer hoping to gather personal or financial information.
- [Package Tracking Scams](#): A form of smishing—text-message phishing—scammers send deceptive messages intended to lure recipients into providing personal or financial information. The messages are disguised as package-tracking updates.
- [Temporary Holiday Jobs](#): Seasonal job opportunities are posted online in an effort to steal information from applicants or obtain free work without paying a hopeful employee.
- [Lookalike Websites and Accounts](#): Traffic to fake websites spike during the holiday season. Floridians must make sure a website is secure and the domain is accurate before inputting personal or financial information.
- [Counterfeit Toys](#): Scammers create fake discount offers for trending toys, but instead send counterfeit toys—or no toys at all—bilking consumers of money and potentially stealing personal information.
- [Shoulder Surfing and Card Skimming](#): Be wary when using an ATM while holiday shopping. Check to see if an ATM looks tampered with and that surroundings are clear before typing in a PIN code or other personal information.
- [Public Wi-Fi Risks](#): Refrain from using public Wi-Fi when shopping online since hackers can take advantage of unsecure public networks to steal personal information.

For more safe shopping tips, view Attorney General Moody's free 2022 Holiday Consumer Protection Guide. The guide also provides tips on holiday giving, as well as a list of recalled items.

To access the guide, click [here](#).

To report a holiday scheme, contact the Florida Attorney General's Office at 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or file a complaint online at [MyFloridaLegal.com](#).

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The Florida Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division issues Consumer Alerts to inform Floridians of emerging scams, new methods used to commit fraud, increased reports of common scams, or any other deceptive practice. Consumer Alerts are designed to notify Floridians about scams and available refunds in an effort to prevent financial losses or other harm caused by deceptive practices. Anyone encountering a scam should report the incident to the Florida Attorney General's Office by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or visiting [MyFloridaLegal.com](#). To view recent Consumer Alerts and for other information about avoiding scams, visit [MyFloridaLegal.com/ConsumerAlert](#).