



## **Rhode Island State Police**

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### **Detective Bureau Press Release**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
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**Scituate, R.I.** The Rhode Island State Police is urging the public to be vigilant of scams in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“During these difficult and unsure times, criminals seek to take advantage of citizens’ concerns about COVID-19, also known as the coronavirus,” said Major Timothy G. Sanzi, Detective Bureau Commander. “Members of law enforcement have observed an increase in fraudulent activity seeking to exploit people’s fears and we want Rhode Islanders to be aware of the scams we are seeing most frequently.”

As the public looks to the internet and social media for answers, they are reminded to obtain accurate information from legitimate sources, particularly government sites such as the Rhode Island Department of Health (<https://health.ri.gov/covid/> [r20.rs6.net]) and the United States Center for Disease Control (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html> [r20.rs6.net]).

Scams are often unsolicited and reach their victims by telephone, text message, or email. Telephone scammers often pretend to be a nonprofit organization seeking financial donations to assist those affected by COVID-19. While it is in human nature to help those less fortunate, citizens are discouraged from giving any personal or financial information such as credit cards or banking information over the phone.

Unsolicited emails with malicious attachments or links to fraudulent websites are designed to trick victims into revealing sensitive information or donating to fraudulent charities. The State Police reminds citizens to be wary of any such text messages or emails and to delete them immediately.

If you believe you are the victim of such a fraud, you can contact the following agencies:  
The Rhode Island United Way Cybercrime Hotline by dialing 2-1-1.  
Rhode Island’s Consumer Protection Unit at the Office of the Attorney General (401) 274-4400.  
Your local state police barracks or local police department. During this time of social distancing, you are encouraged to initiate such a complaint by telephone.  
For more information please refer to the below link:

**[Prevalent COVID - 19 Scams and Fraud \[r20.rs6.net\]](https://www.ri.gov/covid-19-scams-and-fraud)**

