

News Release

Ilene Shapiro – Summit County Executive
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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County Executive Warns Residents of COVID-19 Scams

SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO—Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro is urging county residents to be on the lookout for a growing number of COVID-19 scams. The county’s Public Safety Emergency Management Agency (EMA) has been monitoring reports of local, state and national scams as part of its response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

“It’s extremely disheartening to see scammers try to take advantage of people during a crisis of this magnitude,” said Executive Shapiro. “Thankfully, my staff and many others at the state and national level are working hard to keep scammers from preying on our residents. I urge everyone to exercise increased caution as we navigate these uncertain times.”

Summit County EMA has identified the following COVID-19 scams:

- **IRS Scam:** The IRS will never call and ask for personal or financial information. An IRS COVID-19 Stimulus Check phone scam has been reported; the IRS will not contact you for your bank account information. <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/tax-scams-consumer-alerts>.
- **COVID-19 Cures:** Offers for a COVID-19 vaccine, cure, or treatment via emails, online ads, or unsolicited sales.
- **COVID-19 Supplies:** Companies offering COVID-19 products and supplies. Check online for company validity and customer reviews. Avoid companies whose customers have complained about not receiving items.
- **Hoarding and Price Gauging PPE and essential supplies:** To report, please visit <https://justice.gov/coronavirus>.
- **VPN Cyber Threat:** Cyber attackers are likely to target VPN vulnerabilities as more people telework due to COVID-19.

- **Falsified Medical Documents:** FBI warns of individuals providing falsified medical documents claiming positive COVID-19 test results to employers.
- **“County” utility calls:** Calls received from spoofed 643 numbers related to utility payments. These calls are not actually Summit County numbers and should be ignored; do not respond to voicemails.
- **Dominion Energy:** Scammers are going door to door posing as Dominion Energy representatives and threatening to disconnect service unless payment is collected. The utility will never call, text or email customers to request personal information such as their Social Security numbers, credit card numbers, or bank account numbers. All company employees carry a photo ID card. Residents can call Dominion Energy at 800-362-7557 to report a suspected scam.

If you think you are a victim of a scam or attempted fraud involving COVID-19, contact the National Center for Disaster Fraud Hotline at 866-720-5721 or via email at disaster@leo.gov.

Executive Shapiro reminds residents they should never send money via wire transfer, gift card or prepaid credit card to a stranger, or give personal information to someone who has contacted them unexpectedly.

Summit County residents can report scams to the Better Business Bureau of Akron at 330-253-4590. They can also report and view known scams at <https://www.bbb.org/scamtracker>.

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