



RCC RETAIL
COUNCIL
OF CANADA

CCCD CONSEIL CANADIEN
DU COMMERCE
DE DÉTAIL

Financial Crime Trend Bulletin:

COVID-19 Frauds

2020-03-20

#KNOWFRAUD

#SHOWMETHEFRAUD

Fraud: Recognize. Reject. Report.

Purpose

This bulletin was prepared to warn members of Retail Council of Canada (RCC) of COVID-19 related frauds that have already or may begin to occur in Canada.

Overview

As COVID-19 (coronavirus) continues to spread globally, the CAFC, in partnership with RCC is warning the public to be on the lookout for associated scams. Fraudsters are creative and want to profit from consumers' fears, uncertainties and misinformation.

Protect yourself and be aware of:

- Fraudsters have been going into retail stores and distribution centers offering fake decontamination services.
- Fraudsters have been going into retail stores and inspecting first aid kits, then approaching a store manager, explaining that their first aid kit is not *"COVID-19 compliant"*, and offering their services. *(No law or regulation currently exists regarding first aid kits)*
- Private companies offering 'fast' COVID-19 tests for sale. *Only hospitals are currently authorized to perform the tests. No other tests are genuine or guaranteed to provide accurate results.*
- Consumers are purchasing large amounts of products and reselling them at higher prices to retailers. *These products may be expired, of lower quality and increase your health risks.*
- Fraudsters are creating fraudulent and deceptive online ads offering cleaning products, hand sanitizers and other items in high demand.
- Fraudsters are sending phishing, spear phishing and other malicious email campaigns to retailers that capitalize on the public's fears about COVID-19
- Unsolicited calls, emails and texts giving medical advice or requesting urgent action or payment
 - If you didn't initiate contact, you don't know who you're communicating to
 - Never respond or click on suspicious links and attachments
 - Never give out your personal or financial details
- Unauthorized or fraudulent charities requesting money for victims, products or research
 - Don't be pressured into making a donation
 - Verify that a charity is registered

- Health Canada has warned several companies selling fraudulent products that claim to treat or prevent the disease. *No such products have been approved. The unapproved drugs threaten public health and violate laws.*
- Fraudsters are creating fraudulent and deceptive online ads offering cleaning products, hand sanitizers and other items in high demand.
- Financial advisors are offering financial aid and/or loans to help you get through the shutdowns

Warning Signs – How to Protect Yourself

- Beware of false or misleading information.
- Find the latest information available from Public Health Agency of Canada at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html> or the World Health Organization at: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>
- Contact your insurance provider to answer any health insurance questions.
- Beware of high-priced or low-quality products.
- Beware of unsolicited medical advisory emails with links or attachments. Fraudsters may spoof the information of government and health care organizations.
- Beware of miracle cures, herbal remedies and other questionable offers (e.g. vaccinations, fasters tests, etc).

If you think you or someone you know has been a victim of fraud, please contact Sonny Brar, VP of Member Relations and Education at sbrar@retailcouncil.org, the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre at 1-888-495-8501 or report online at www.antifraudcentre.ca.