



NJOHSP

INTELLIGENCE NOTE

March 17, 2020

NJOHSP Urges Residents to Verify COVID-19 Information, Be Alert for Potential Scammers

Several individuals and groups are attempting to leverage the COVID-19 pandemic in order to cause panic and scam unsuspecting residents. NJOHSP urges all residents to ensure the validity of information from online platforms and be wary of scams targeting unwitting residents, virtually and physically.

- Over the last week, an NJOHSP review found that misinformation has spread in a growing number of private groups and messages, which are difficult for social media companies to moderate. Furthermore, a private tech company identified at least 80 US-based websites posting misleading or false information about the disease, including CDC.news and Science.news.
- On March 10, local police in Moorestown (Burlington County) warned residents of people purporting to be from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), specifically that “there have been social media posts regarding individuals going door to door claiming to be from the CDC.”
- On March 5, Cybersecurity firm Check Point reported that over 4,000 coronavirus-related domains had been registered since the beginning of 2020, and 3 percent were considered malicious and another 5 percent were suspicious. Additionally, the company reported an increase in phishing attacks to lure victims into unwittingly installing a computer virus under the guise of coronavirus-themed emails containing attachments. Scammers leveraged fake domains such as “cdc.gov.org” instead of the correct “cdc.gov.”

COVID-19: Information for Communities and the General Public

For the most up-to-date information, please visit nj.gov/health/.

- Steps you can take to prevent spread of the flu and common cold will also help prevent coronavirus:
 - o Wash hands often with soap and water; if not available, use hand sanitizer
 - o Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
 - o Avoid contact with people who are sick
 - o Stay home while you are sick and avoid contact with others
 - o Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing

Additional Resources

[Communicable Disease Service, New Jersey Department of Health](#)

[NJCCIC Weekly Bulletin: March 12, 2020](#)