



OFFICE OF THE STATE INSPECTOR GENERAL

BRIAN P. KEMP
Governor

DEBORAH WALLACE
State Inspector General

March 19, 2020

Dear Agency Heads, HR Directors, CFOs, CIOs,

While many State employees are teleworking, we urge you to keep regular communication with your employees during this time. If we work together now, being vigilant, we can hopefully prevent losses to the State that could have potentially been avoided. Our office has investigated many incidents where employees fell victim to email scams and provided an employee's paycheck or a vendor's payment to a scammer's bank account. Oftentimes these types of incidents occur because of lack of communication within the agency.

This is a reminder to be mindful of internal controls and appropriate policies and procedures, particularly regarding changes to banking and payroll information, and to reinforce the reporting of these types of incidents to superiors to prevent further loss.

If anyone in your agency has experienced a similar situation, please contact the Office of the Inspector General at: inspector.general@oig.ga.gov or [404-656-7924](tel:404-656-7924).

Unfortunately, dishonest criminals may take advantage of the current pandemic. Legitimate vendors will never call your agencies demanding payment in order to avoid disconnecting services. They do provide courtesy reminders and alerts to help you manage your billing invoices. If you receive a call or an email demanding payment by a credit card, cash cards (like "Green Dot" or "Bluebird" cards) or any other method, hang up and report the call to your supervisor. Pause before acting in haste!

Here are some precautionary measures we urge you to share with your employees to avoid becoming victim to a scam:

- Don't click on links from sources you don't know – one click could download a virus onto your computer or device. Make sure the anti-malware and anti-virus software on your computer is up to date.
- Watch for emails claiming to be from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or experts saying they have information about the virus. For the most up-to-date information about coronavirus, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

- Ignore online offers for vaccinations. If you see ads touting prevention, treatment, or cure claims for coronavirus, ask yourself: if there's been a medical breakthrough, would you first hear about it through an advertisement or sales pitch?
- Do your homework when it comes to donations, whether through charities or crowdfunding sites. Don't let anyone rush you into making a donation. If someone wants donations in cash, by gift card, or by wiring money, don't do it.
- Be alert to "investment opportunities." The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) is warning people about online promotions, including social media, claiming that the products or services of publicly-traded companies can prevent, detect, or cure coronavirus and that the stock of these companies will dramatically increase in value as a result.

We understand the massive impact this situation is having on our State operations as well as the entire world. Thank you for working with us during these unusual times to keep State programs operating efficiently and avoid compromising situations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deborah A. Wallace". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'D' and 'W'.

Deb Wallace, CIG, CFE
State Inspector General

