



COVID-19 Related Fraud and Property Crime

Unfortunately, there are criminals who use the coronavirus pandemic as an opportunity for their activities. The following is an excellent resource that has been adapted from Victim Support Europe detailing types of crimes to be aware of and how to protect yourself.

At the moment, the experts have identified three main areas of coronavirus-related crime:

1. **Cybercrime:** with many more people staying at home and especially working from home, there is a heightened risk of security breaches, hacking, and fraud. There are even fraudulent websites and apps posing as coronavirus trackers which are in fact phishing attacks or scams. Interpol also [reports](#) phone fraud where criminals call victims pretending to be clinic or hospital officials, who claim that a relative of the victim has fallen sick with the virus and request payments for medical treatment. Do not send any payments to anyone you do not know and verify all the information you receive through phone or online. Follow Europol's advice below to make sure you are protected.
2. **Fake cures and medicine:** there is no known cure for COVID-19 at the moment. There is also no vaccine. Do not buy anything sold as any type of medicine or remedy against coronavirus as it is fake. Europol [reports](#) thousands of seized counterfeit pharmaceuticals and medical devices seized as well as thousands of websites taken down.
3. **Organised property crime:** it has been reported in various countries within the EU that perpetrators gain access to private homes by impersonating medical staff providing information material or hygiene products or conducting a "Corona test" with the intention of theft and robbery. Remain vigilant and do not let anyone you do not know in.



CRIME PREVENTION OTTAWA

Partners for a safer community

PRÉVENTION DU CRIME OTTAWA

Ensemble vers une communauté plus sécuritaire

MAKE YOUR HOME A CYBER SAFE STRONGHOLD

-  **Wi-Fi:** always change the default router password
-  **Install antivirus software** on all devices connected to the internet
-  **Review your apps' permissions** and delete those you don't use
-  **Choose strong and different passwords** for your email and social media accounts
-  **Back up your data** and run regular software updates
-  **Secure electronic devices** with passwords, PIN or biometric information
-  **Review the privacy settings** of your social media accounts

Online shopping safety tips

-  Buy from **reliable** online vendors and check individual ratings
-  **Think twice:** if an offer sounds too good to be true, it probably is
-  Use **credit cards** when shopping online for stronger customer protection
-  Check your bank account often for **suspicious activity**



The [Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre](#) tracks the latest updates on coronavirus-related crime. They also list further examples of such [COVID-related crimes](#).

If you have become victim of any type of crime, please consult [Ottawa Police's Victim Crisis Unit website](#) for list of supports.