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TIP OF THE WEEK

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COVID-19 CONTACT TRACING TEXT MESSAGE SCAMS

You might have heard a little about contact tracing. This is the process of identifying people who have come into contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, instructing them to quarantine and monitor their symptoms daily.

There are professionals hired by the Department of Public Health that work with infected individuals to get names and phone numbers for everyone that person came into contact with while possibly infectious. Those names and numbers are often kept in an online system. A legitimate text from a Lincoln County Public Health representative would NEVER include a link to click on. If they are reaching out for contact tracing purposes, they will do so first via telephone call and will clearly identify themselves as representing public health and their purpose for calling. In addition to text, if someone provides them with an email or a social media platform, they will contact people by these means as well. Tracers who call will not ask for information like a Social Security number. Legitimate tracers won't ask you for money or information like your bank account or a credit card etc. Anyone who does is a scammer.

Contact tracing plays a vital role in helping to stop the spread of COVID-19, but scammers have been taking advantage of this process and are sending text messages. Theirs are spam text messages that ask you to click a link.

Don't Click the Link- Clicking on the link will download software onto your device. Giving access to scammers. Ignore and delete these scam messages.

There are several ways you can filter unwanted text messages:

- Your phone may have an option to filter and block messages from unknown senders or spam.
- Your wireless provider may have a tool or service that lets you block texts messages.
- Some call-blocking apps also let you block unwanted text messages.

Here are several other steps you can take to protect yourself from text scammers.

- Protect your online accounts with multi-factor authentication. This makes it harder for scammers to log in to your accounts if they do get your username and password.
- Enable auto updates for the operating systems on your electronic devices.
- Back up the data on your devices regularly

Direct link to information source: <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2020/05/covid-19-contact-tracing-text-message-scams>

For more safety tips and other information about your Sheriff's Office, please visit our website at www.lincolncountysheriff.net and 'like' us on Facebook at Lincoln County Sheriff's Office - Oregon.