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SCAM ALERT: AG Balderas Warns New Mexicans about Common Online Holiday Shopping Scams

Santa Fe NM – This morning, Attorney General Hector Balderas issued a Scam Alert to encourage online holiday shoppers to avoid common scams. The Attorney General is issuing tips for avoiding online scams during this hectic time of year to help New Mexico shoppers stay alert and protect their finances.

“The holiday shopping season is one of the most dangerous times for consumers to fall victim to scams,” Attorney General Balderas said. “Many people ramp up their spending this time of year and making sure that gifts arrive on time can put pressure on shoppers to leap into expenses before looking into whether businesses and their products are legitimate.”

Common Online Scams and How to Avoid Them:

The Attorney General has listed some of the most common online scams and ways to avoid falling prey to them. Don’t give out your credit card or other financial information for a chance at the newest tech toy, “free” gift card, seasonal job or holiday vacation rental. Your information can be sold or used to commit identity theft. Attorney General Balderas is encouraging holiday shoppers to beware of the following online scams and take steps to avoid them:

- A scammer who opens an online shop, takes payment, but never ships out merchandise paid for. “Remember,” Attorney General Balderas cautioned, “anyone can set up an online shop—even someone whose only business is ripping people off.” In order to avoid being scammed, shoppers can confirm that a shop has a physical address and phone number available to remedy any consumer complaints—before placing an order.

- A scammer who offers luxury brands at extremely low prices in order to trick shoppers. “The way to avoid falling prey to this scam,” the Attorney General advised, “is to keep in mind that virtually no one but Santa Claus is going to give away something for virtually nothing.”
- Internet “trolls” and “bots” who lift your personal financial information from pop-up ads can be common on online shopping sites. To avoid falling prey to computer viruses, spyware, malware and other unwanted software, the Attorney General advises online shoppers to never click on a pop-up ad.
- Online retailers who ask for payment through a wire transfer, or by numbers from a gift card or prepaid card. “This practice is a sure sign of a scam,” the Attorney General warned. “Legitimate sellers won’t restrict payment to non-standard methods.”

The Office of Attorney General Hector Balderas offers advocates to help consumers who encounter scams, faulty products and broken promises. The Attorney General advises those who need help to fill out a consumer complaint form on his website at www.nmag.gov or to call 717-3500 and toll-free statewide [1-844-255-9210](tel:1-844-255-9210).

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