







SCAM  
ALERT

## COMPANION PET ADOPTION SCAMS

Scam predators are targeting people who are looking to adopt a companion pet during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

The scam may involve a pet rescue group that seems legitimate and offers a heart-wrenching story about the pet. While they may not require any adoption fees, they ask you to provide a refundable deposit, reimbursement for veterinary bills or up-front transportation costs. They may state that this is urgent and the pet may be euthanized if you do not send the money immediately! In any case, once the scam predator receives your money, they disappear, along with the pet that never really existed.

The Better Business Bureau (BBB), Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals recommends the following to avoid companion pet adoption scams:

-  Never buy or adopt a companion pet without seeing it in person. This is the best way to ensure you are not targeted by a scam predator.
-  Conduct an internet search of the image of the companion pet. If you find multiple pet adoption sites using the same picture, it is most likely a scam.
-  Do not use money transfer apps like Zelle or Venmo with people you do not know well. Protect yourself from these types of scams by only using these apps with close friends or family.
-  Reach out to your city or county animal shelter for a list of adoptable companion pets and lists of reputable adoption agencies.

**Note:** You may report scam predators to the FTC, BBB, Adult Protective Services (APS), Office of the Inspector General and the Federal Bureau of Investigation Internet Crime Complaint Center.

If you think you may be a victim of a scam, contact  
**San Bernardino County APS at 1 (877) 565-2020**  
or your local police department.