



IN REVIEW:

**STAY SAFE AND SHOP WITH CONFIDENCE THIS SUMMER,
BONUS: NO COST CYBERSECURITY ASSESSMENTS**

NEW OFFER TO ALL CERTIFIED BUSINESS: SEO AND CYBERSECURITY CONSULTATIONS

We're able to offer our members in partnership with Fayetteville State University to help you increase revenue while strengthening your cybersecurity. Specifically, Fort Liberty, the DoD, and all federal government contracts are about to lock small businesses out of any contracts unless a business can say it went through a series of best practices for cybersecurity defined by the Commerce Department's National Institute of Standards and Technology (which is called NIST for short).

Most small businesses have never heard of NIST let alone the 110 cybersecurity controls they will have to comply with to be considered for DoD contracts. The good news is that those cyber controls are common sense, good cyber precautions. That's why a lot of the biggest companies will also demand compliance by their small business suppliers.

This FSU program is funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce and allows you, at no charge, to go through how you can win new contracts with this checklist for cybersecure growth. You'll need an hour for the FSU students who have been certified as community Navigators to walk you through a series of questions.

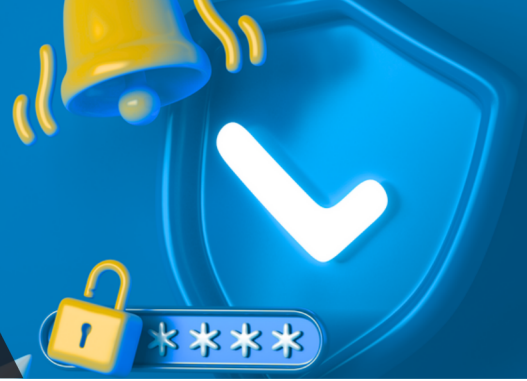


To summarize, this program will measure how Chamber member-companies benefit through stronger outreach, revenue, and cybersecurity.

Those metrics start with:

- Helping customers find you faster through better Search Engine Optimization.
- Increasing revenue through more access to government contracts at Fort Liberty and beyond.
- Avoiding a scam or the other costs of ransomware or recovery by strengthening cybersecurity.
- Increasing customer trust because you have assessed the cybersecurity controls that the business needs.

NEWS & SCAM ALERTS



FAKE CHECK SCAMS TARGET INDIVIDUALS SELLING PRODUCTS ONLINE

Individuals using online marketplaces to sell products may get more than they asked for when they receive an email from a “buyer” offering more money than the posted selling price.

In a typical fake check scam, a supposed buyer sends the seller a check made out for more than the asking price. The buyer instructs the seller to deposit the check in the seller’s bank account and wire-transfer the difference. In some cases, the scammer may even tell the seller to keep a portion of the money for the extra effort. Regardless of the pitch, the result is the same! When the seller attempts to cash the check, it will not clear, and funds will not be deposited into the seller’s account. If the seller has already sent money back to the “buyer” or someone else, the seller will be out his own money. The seller may also be charged bank fees for depositing a bad check.

In one case, a resident received a text message from a “buyer” in response to an advertisement for a \$1500 wedding dress listed on a well-known online marketplace. The buyer sent the seller a check from an out-of-state beauty school for \$1,500. Fortunately, the consumer contacted the Attorney General’s Office before depositing the check and wire-transferring money.

Individuals who post items for sale through an online marketplace should watch for these signs of a scam:

- Buyers who say they can only pay by check
- Pressure to return any overpayment immediately
- Requests for wire-transfers, money orders, or prepaid money cards
- Buyers who want the products to be sent to someone else

If you suspect a scam or unfair business practice, report it to the North Carolina Attorney General’s Office by calling

1- 877-5-NO-SCAM (1-877-566-7226)

CHECK OUT THE NC ATTORNEY GENERAL’S VIDEO ON CONSUMER PROTECTION BELOW



Standing Up, Fighting Back (Consumer Protection video)



Attorney General

Josh Stein

AVOIDING TRAVEL-RELATED SCAMS

Are you planning to travel this year? No matter where you're going, how you're getting there, or where you're staying, here are the scams to avoid along the way.

- **You've Won a Vacation:** You get a notification saying you won a free trip. There's just one catch. You must pay a processing fee, a deposit, or a fee for "taxes" to collect the prize. Real prizes are free. And if they ask you to pay by wiring money, sending cash, or paying with gift cards or cryptocurrency to get your prize, it's a scam.

- **Cheap Rental Cars:** Rental cars are in high demand, and scammers are looking to cash in on the fear of missing out. If you suddenly find an available car for cheap, do your research before you provide your personal or payment information. Scammers may have hijacked a legitimate company's ad. And if someone asks you to pre-pay for a rental by wiring money, sending cash, or paying with gift cards or cryptocurrency to get your prize, it's a scam.

- **Fake Rental Listings:** Like with rental cars, scammers hijack real rental listings — changing the contact information and reposting listings on different sites. If you call or email about the rental, you'll reach a scammer, who will probably ask you to pay a deposit or fee by wiring money, sending cash, or paying with gift cards or cryptocurrency. Then, the scammer will disappear, and you will be left with no place to stay. Some scammers also list places that either don't exist or aren't true rentals.



HERE'S HOW TO AVOID SCAMS WHILE PLANNING YOUR TRIP:

- **Do some research.** If you're looking to rent, search the rental company's name, plus words like "scam," "review," or "complaint." You can also conduct an image search to see if images used in an ad are being used anywhere else on the internet.
- **Spot rental listing scams.** Look for the name of the rental company and search their website — using a link you know is real — to see if the property is listed there, too. If it isn't, the listing is likely a scam.
- **Pay by credit card.** This gives you the best protection. Scammers want you to pay in ways that make it hard to get your money back — like wire transfers through Western Union or MoneyGram, cash, cryptocurrency, or payment apps. Traveling is stressful enough without being

SCAN THE QR and bookmark the page for easy access to a list of trusted businesses.

Build a referral network or shop with confidence with fellow certified businesses.

