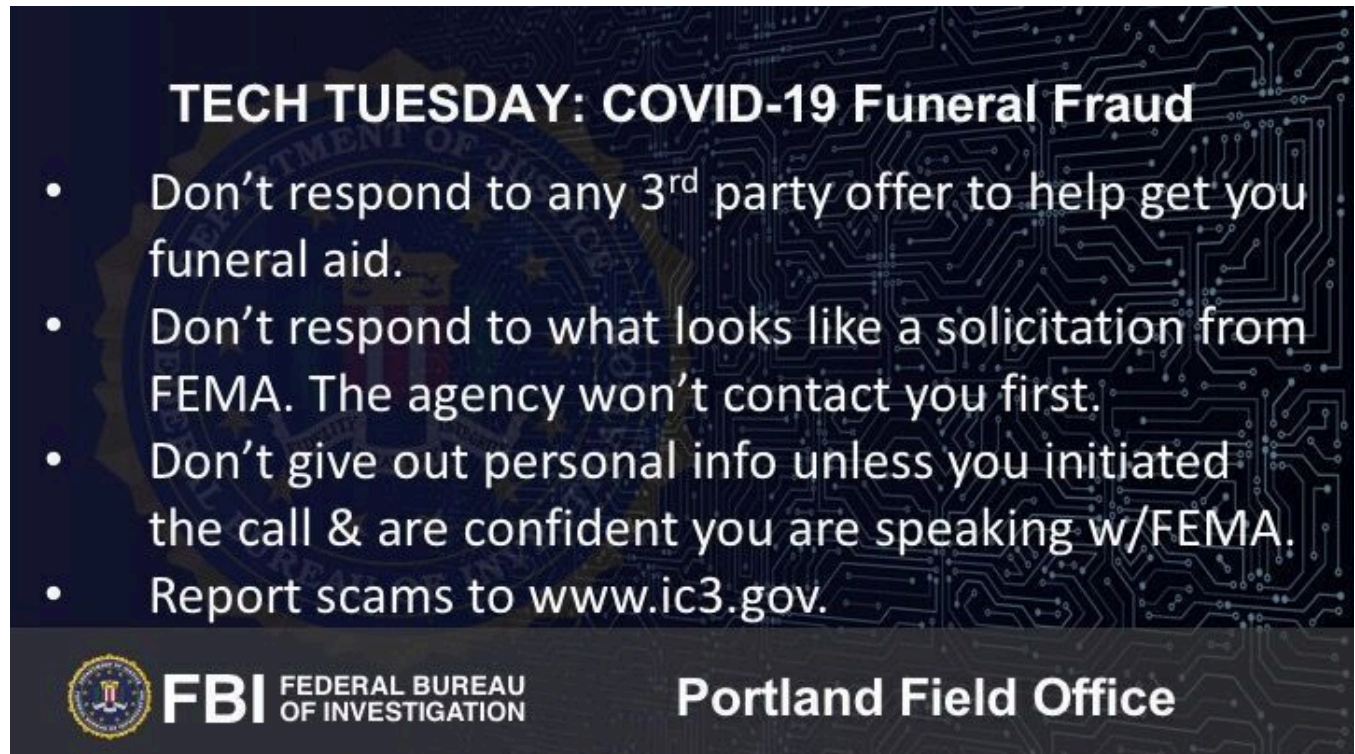


Tech Tuesday: Building a Digital Defense Against COVID-19 Funeral Fraud

May 18, 2021

A graphic with a dark blue background featuring a circuit board pattern and a faint FBI seal. The text is white and bold. At the top, it says 'TECH TUESDAY: COVID-19 Funeral Fraud'. Below that is a bulleted list of five items. At the bottom left is the FBI logo and text, and at the bottom right is the text 'Portland Field Office'.

TECH TUESDAY: COVID-19 Funeral Fraud

- Don't respond to any 3rd party offer to help get you funeral aid.
- Don't respond to what looks like a solicitation from FEMA. The agency won't contact you first.
- Don't give out personal info unless you initiated the call & are confident you are speaking w/FEMA.
- Report scams to www.ic3.gov.

 **FBI** FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Portland Field Office

Welcome to the Oregon FBI's Tech Tuesday segment. Today: Building a digital defense against COVID funeral scams.

Recently, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) started providing up to \$9,000 in reimbursement funds to applicants for each COVID-19 related funeral for which they were responsible. Let's say you had a parent die, and the death certificate confirms COVID was the cause. You paid for the funeral and have receipts to prove it. You can apply to FEMA for reimbursement.

If you were responsible for multiple funerals, you can apply for a total of up to \$35,500. There are some restrictions in terms of eligibility for the funds, and anyone who is interested in applying should check [FEMA.gov](https://www.fema.gov/disasters/coronavirus/economic/funeral-assistance/faq) for all eligibility requirements (<https://www.fema.gov/disasters/coronavirus/economic/funeral-assistance/faq>)

As with any disaster or relief program, scam artists will attempt to take advantage of those most in need. According to FEMA, one particular fraud that is already taking root involves bad actors who offer to

help you apply for aid. Note: there is only one way to apply for FEMA's funeral aid, and that is by calling FEMA directly at 844-684-6333. There is no online application process and no legitimate way that others can apply on your behalf.

Here's how to protect yourself:

Don't respond to any third-party offer, email, text message, or social media post offering to help you get aid.

Don't respond to any solicitation that looks like it is from FEMA directly. FEMA will not contact you unless you make the initial call.

Never give out personal information – including name, date of birth, Social Security number or other sensitive information – for yourself or for your deceased relative unless you made the call to FEMA and you know you are speaking to a FEMA representative.

If you believe are a victim of an online scam, you should report the incident to the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center at www.ic3.gov or call your FBI local office.