

# FRAUD ALERT!

From the Office of Lee County Sheriff Mike Scott

## Scareware-Protect Your Computer

If you've spent any time surfing the Internet you've probably seen them—those pesky pop-up messages telling you your computer is infected with a virus. To get rid of it all you have to do is order the antivirus software advertised in the pop-up; ***before* you click, beware!** Most internet security companies will ***not*** use ads to tell you your computer's been infected with a virus; most of these pop-ups are scams and according to the FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center it is one of the fastest growing types of Internet fraud.

The scam, known as “scareware”, uses scare tactics to get you to purchase their “antivirus” software. This so-called antivirus software actually installs malicious software (malware) into your system. Even more bad news is many of these criminals operate outside the U.S., making investigations difficult and complex for law enforcement.

### How to spot a “scareware” scam:

- Does the pop-up use “non-clickable” icons? To build authenticity into their software, “scareware” will show a list of reputable icons, like those of software companies or security publications. However, the user can't click through to the sites to see the actual reviews or recommendations.
- Is the pop-up ad hard to close? “Scareware” pop-ups employ aggressive techniques and will not close easily after clicking the “close” or “X” button.
- Have you heard of the software before? Cyber criminals use easy-to-remember names like Virus Shield, Antivirus, or VirusRemover.

**How to protect yourself:** Make sure your computer is fully protected by legitimate, up-to-date antivirus software.



To report a fraud or scam contact:  
Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office Fraud Line  
850-651-7674