

# HENDERSON BROTHERS UPDATE

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## “Mandatory” COVID-19 Test Texts are a Scam

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The coronavirus outbreak has been big business for scammers. In the past few days, BBB Scam Tracker ([BBB.org/ScamTracker](https://www.bbb.org/scamtracker)) has gotten numerous reports of phony text messages claiming to be from a government agency.

### *How the Scam Works:*

You get a text message that looks like it comes from the US federal government. Current reports say that scammers are impersonating the US Department of Health and Human Services, but they are unlikely to stop there. The message tells you that you must take a “mandatory online COVID-19 test” and has a link to a website. But there is no online test for coronavirus!

These are far from the only coronavirus text message scams (often known as “smishing” for SMS phishing). BBB has also gotten reports of texts urging recipients to complete “the census” or fill out an online application in order to receive their stimulus check.

No matter what the message says, don’t click! These texts are phishing for personal information. They also can download malware to your device, which opens you up to risk for identity theft.

### *Tips to Spot a COVID-19 Text Message Scam:*

- Government agencies do not typically communicate through text messages.
- Ignore instructions to text “STOP” or “NO” to prevent future texts. This is a common ploy by scammers to confirm they have a real, active phone number.
- If you think your text message is real, be sure it’s directing to a web address like “agency.gov” or “agency.ca,” not “agency.otherwebsite.com.”
- Check for look-alikes. Be sure to do your research and see if a government agency or organization actually exists. Find contact info on your own and call them to be sure the person you’ve heard from is legitimate.