COVID-19 Testing Frauds

(Fort Worth, TX) – Warning: As cases of COVID-19 continue spiking, watch out if you're among the many seeking tests.

Fake testing sites have popped up across the country and some scammers are asking for credit card and social security numbers – and they never provide test results.

"Be careful," Tarrant County Criminal District Attorney Sharen Wilson said. "Research the facilities before you go and make sure it's a valid testing site."

The Better Business Bureau and Federal Bureau of Investigation are among the agencies that have put out warnings, urging people to be careful when getting tested at pop up sites and when buying at-home test kits.

"Scarcity often leads to potential scams for a product that doesn't exist, the compromise of personal identifiable information, or the increase of deceptive advertising," the BBB warning states.

Anyone caught fraudulently gathering personal information such as credit card or social security numbers faces a variety of charges.

If there are less than five items of personal information gathered, the offender faces a state jail felony which carries a jail term of up to two years and a fine of up to $10,000. If there are more than 50 items of personal information gathered, they face a first-degree felony which carries a prison term of five to 99 years and a fine of up to $10,000.

Protect yourself:

o   Research the facility or testing site before you go. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has information at www.fda.gov.

o   Talk to your doctor. He or she can help you find a legitimate testing site. When in doubt, go to sites affiliated with local hospitals or city or county government.

o   Keep your personal information – social security numbers, credit card numbers – to yourself. Legitimate testing sites won't ask for your social security number or a credit card number.

o   Avoid unverified websites offering COVID-19 tests.

o   Contact the Better Business Bureau to report a fraud or scam at www.bbb.org/scamtracker.