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March 2-8, 2025 is National Consumer Protection Week. First organized by The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) in 1998, it is a time used to spread awareness and provide information to consumers to help safeguard themselves against rising instances of fraud and online scams.

Tips to remember:

- ▶ Do not send money to people you do not know, especially by wire transfer or popular money transfer services like Zelle®.
- ▶ Watch what you click—never click on links or attachments in unsolicited emails or text messages. That is how scammers put malware (any kind of computer bug with malicious intent) on your devices.
- ▶ Do not trust the legitimacy of something by the way it looks. Emails and websites are easy to fake with copied logos and graphics. An imposter can even cloak their real phone numbers that show up on your caller ID.
- ▶ It's best to shred sensitive information, regularly monitor your accounts, and limit what you share on social media.

Did you know...

An unwanted package scam (also known as brushing) is a fraudulent e-commerce tactic where people receive unsolicited packages. The goal of these scams is to boost sales and post fake reviews. While it may appear to be a victimless crime—you did after all get some free stuff—the reality is that your personal information may be compromised.

Recently, a new variation on the brushing scam has emerged, adding a component of quishing (short for QR code phishing). A QR code may be included in the package that sends you to a fake website once you scan it. These criminals use it to get your personal identifiable information.

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