

## Get Ready for Shortage Scams

October 24, 2021 - If you have been to any kind of store lately, you've probably noticed bare shelves. The White House, congress and the FED are trying to blame supply chain issues for the shortages. Many Americans however are placing the blame on inept economic management coming from the White House, congress and the FED. Regardless of the reason though, it's getting very hard not to make a comparison with Venezuela every time you walk into a store and are unable to find the things that you want or need. And given the fact that we're coming into the holiday season... the season that tends to grow consumer scams exponentially... we're expecting to see shortage scams abound.

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Scam artists aren't stupid. Their scams become more effective when consumers feel a sense of desperation. Enter Santa Claus.

The last thing any parent wants on Christmas morning is a disappointed child. But this year there are likely to be a lot of them. In order to avoid that, many parents will go online to look for the things their children are asking for. In some cases, that will work out fine. But those who aren't careful could find themselves being victimized.

There are certain places you can make online purchases and be reasonably sure that you'll be safe. Major retailers aren't typically a problem. But if you are purchasing from a retailer that you've never heard of before, do a little research first. If someone is advertising that they have a plentiful supply of a hard-to-find item, and you've never heard of them before, then do a lot of research. There is a good possibility that you're being scammed.

Stay away from bulletin board sites like Craigslist for person-to-person purchases. Not only could you find yourself being scammed, but if you are thinking of meeting the person selling the goods you want for an in-person exchange, you could actually be placing yourself at risk for physical danger. You'd be much better off going to a site like eBay that actually has some programs in place to thwart scams.

And be on the lookout for counterfeit items. Not only are they not worth the money you are paying for them, they can also be dangerous depending upon what you are purchasing and who you are giving it too.

Unfortunately, it is more than toys that are in short supply this year. Virtually all electronics items that are in high demand are also hard to find. And there are indications that we may begin to see food shortages too. This means that just about

everyone could become susceptible to scams this year. So when you are shopping, and getting frustrated because you can't find what you're looking for, don't lose your sense of skepticism when you finally find a product that will work for you. Maybe you really did just hit the motherload. But just maybe the product you think you found isn't what it appears to be. Buyer beware!

by Jim Malmberg

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