CHECKLIST · SCAMS & SECURITY

Fake one-star reviews, then a demand for money: how to handle a review extortion scam

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- [ ] **Don't pay or bargain.** Google says paying can encourage further attempts and doesn't guarantee the reviews are removed.
- [ ] **Screenshot every demand.** Capture the date, time and sender's contact details on each WhatsApp, Telegram, email or social media message.
- [ ] **List the suspect reviews.** Copy a direct link to each one and note when the spike started and when the first demand arrived.
- [ ] **Lodge Google's merchant extortion report form.** Attach the screenshots and include how the scammers contacted you.
- [ ] **Report it to Scamwatch.** Use scamwatch.gov.au/report-a-scam, and make a police report through cyber.gov.au for attempted extortion.
- [ ] **Escalate to the Small Business Ombudsman if Google doesn't resolve it.** Keep any Google case number or report confirmation for the ASBFEO dispute form.

NOTES

General information only, not legal, tax or financial advice. Check the full story and its sources before acting.