

COVID-19 Update: Sports Order Variance Process, Entertainment Venue Order

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—Ohio Governor Mike DeWine and Lt. Governor Jon Husted today provided the following updates on Ohio's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

SPORTS ORDER VARIANCE PROCESS

Governor DeWine today discussed the recently-issued Director's Order that Provides Mandatory Requirements for Youth, Collegiate, Amateur, Club, and Professional Sports.

The order limits the maximum number of spectators gathered at an outdoor sports venue to the lesser of 1,500 individuals or 15 percent of fixed, seated capacity. The maximum for indoor sports venues is the lesser of 300 individuals or 15 percent of fixed, seated capacity.

"The main purpose of permitting spectators at school sports events is for officials and loved ones of players, coaches, team staff members, other event participants to attend," said Governor DeWine. "Ideally, the spectator limit would enable at least two, and perhaps up to four, family members to attend a sports event, provided that the venue is large enough to allow at least six feet of social distancing between groups."

If a venue has more room to permit addi-

tional socially-distanced spectator capacity, a variance provision in the order allows schools to re-



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quest a higher spectator limit by submitting a plan in writing to their local health department and the Ohio Department of Health. The variance plan must include a justification for increased capacity and an explanation of how social distancing will be maintained between family groups.

It is the responsibility of the school/venue to monitor and enforce the social distancing requirement, prohibition on congregating among spectators, and the other provisions outlined in the

sports order. Evaluating a sports venue's variance plan may require conversations with school/venue officials and a site visit. The Ohio Department of Health will rely upon local health departments to conduct the first assessment of the variance plan.

Variances will not be granted to expand the number of fans beyond family members of both teams and others who may perform during the event.

ENTERTAINMENT VENUE ORDER

Interim Ohio Department of Health Director Lance Himes today signed the Director's Order that Provides Mandatory Requirements for Entertainment Venues.

2020 CENSUS

Governor DeWine today reminded Ohio citizens to complete the 2020 Census.

The Census determines how \$675 billion is distributed among the states and Ohio's representation in Congress.

Those who have not yet completed the census can do so at www.2020Census.gov or by calling 1-844-330-2020.

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Lt. Governor Husted provided a re-

minder about the Ohio Diversity & Inclusion Technology Internship Program, which pairs college students with tech companies and any company with a technology-related need.

The program is looking for additional businesses to apply. Visit development.ohio.gov for more information.

CURRENT COVID-19 DATA

There are 116,495 confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 in Ohio and 3,996 confirmed and probable COVID-19 deaths. A total of 12,956 people have been hospitalized, including 2,903 admissions to intensive care units. In-depth data can be accessed by visiting coronavirus.ohio.gov.

Video of today's full update, including versions with foreign language translation, can be viewed on the Ohio Channel's YouTube page.

For more information on Ohio's response to COVID-19, visit coronavirus.ohio.gov or call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH.



UNITED STATES FILES COMPLAINT TO FORFEIT 280 CRYPTOCURRENCY ACCOUNTS TIED TO HACKS OF TWO EXCHANGES BY NORTH KOREAN ACTORS

WASHINGTON - The Justice Department today filed a civil forfeiture complaint detailing two hacks of virtual currency exchanges by North Korean actors. These actors stole millions of dollars' worth of cryptocurrency and ultimately laundered the funds through Chinese over-the-counter (OTC) cryptocurrency traders. The complaint follows related criminal and civil actions announced in March 2020 pertaining to the theft of \$250 million in cryptocurrency through other exchange hacks by North Korean actors.

"Today's action publicly exposes the ongoing connections between North Korea's cyber-hacking program and a Chinese cryptocurrency money laundering network," said Acting Assistant Attorney General Brian C. Rabbitt of the Justice Department's Criminal Division. "This case underscores the department's ongoing commitment to counter the threat presented by North Korean cyber hackers by exposing their criminal networks and tracing and seizing their ill-gotten gains."

"Today, prosecutors and investigators have once again exemplified our commitment to attribute national security cyber threats, to impose costs on these actors, and bring some measure of relief to victims of malicious cyber activities," said Assistant Attorney General John C. Demers of the Justice Department's National Security Division. "Although North Korea is unlikely to stop trying to pillage the international financial sector to fund a failed economic and political regime, actions like those today send a powerful message to the private sector and foreign governments regarding the benefits of working with us to counter this threat."

"As part of our commitment to safeguarding national security, this office has been at the forefront of targeting North Korea's criminal attacks on the financial system," said Acting U.S. Attorney Michael R. Sherwin of the District of Columbia. "This complaint reveals the incredible skill of our Cryptocurrency Strike Force in tracing and seizing virtual currency, which criminals previously thought to be impossible."

"Despite the highly sophisticated laundering techniques used, IRS-CI's Cybercrimes Unit was able to successfully trace stolen funds directly back to North Korean actors," said Don Fort, Chief of IRS Criminal Investigation (IRS-CI). "IRS-CI will continue to collaborate with its law enforcement partners to combat foreign and domestic operations that threaten the United States financial system and national security."

"FBI efforts to stop the flow of threat finance around the world are central to our strategy

to address transnational crime," said Assistant Director Calvin A. Shivers of the FBI's Criminal Investigative Division. "This strategy is strengthened by the skills and expertise we continue to develop in virtual asset investigations such as this, which enable the FBI and our partners to identify and seize illicit assets."

"As North Korea becomes bolder and more desperate in their efforts to steal money using sophisticated money laundering techniques, HSI will continue to apply pressure by exposing their fraudulent transactions," said Special Agent in Charge Steven Cagen of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Denver. "We are committed to safeguarding the interest of the United States against the criminal elements in North Korea to protect the integrity of the cyber financial system."

"At U.S. Cyber Command, we leverage a persistent engagement approach to challenge our adversaries' actions in cyberspace," said Brigadier General Joe Hartman, Commander of the Cyber National Mission Force. "This includes disrupting North Korean efforts to illicitly generate revenue. Department of Defense cyber operations do not occur in isolation. Persistent engagement includes acting through cyber-enabled operations as much as it does sharing information with our interagency partners to do the same."

"Today's complaint demonstrates that North Korean actors cannot hide their crimes within the anonymity of the internet. International cryptocurrency laundering schemes undermine the integrity of our financial systems at a global level, and we will use every tool in our arsenal to investigate and disrupt these crimes," said Special Agent in Charge Emmerson Buie Jr. of the FBI's Chicago Field Office. "The FBI will continue to impose risks and consequences on criminals who seek to undermine our national security interests."

The forfeiture complaint filed today details two related hacks of virtual currency exchanges.

As alleged in the complaint, in July 2019, a virtual currency exchange was hacked by an actor tied to North Korea. The hacker allegedly stole over \$272,000 worth of alternative cryptocurrencies and tokens, including Proton Tokens, PlayGame tokens, and IHT Real Estate Protocol tokens. Over the subsequent months, the funds were laundered through several intermediary addresses and other virtual currency exchanges. In many instances, the actor converted the cryptocurrency into BTC, Tether, or other forms of cryptocurrency - a process known as "chain hopping" - in order to obfuscate the transaction path. As detailed in the pleadings, law enforce-

ment was nonetheless able to trace the funds, despite the sophisticated laundering techniques used.

As also alleged in the pleadings, in September 2019, a U.S.-based company was hacked in a related incident. The North Korea-associated hacker gained access to the company's virtual currency wallets, funds held by the company on other platforms, and funds held by the company's partners. The hacker stole nearly \$2.5 million and laundered it through over 100 accounts at another virtual currency exchange.

The funds from both of the above hacks, as well as hacks previously detailed in a March 2020 forfeiture action (1:20-cv-00606-TJK), were all allegedly laundered by the same group of Chinese OTC actors. The infrastructure and communication accounts used to further the intrusions and fund transfers were also tied to North Korea.

The claims made in this complaint are only allegations and do not constitute a determination of liability. The burden to prove forfeitability in a civil forfeiture proceeding is upon the government. The investigation was conducted by IRS-CI's Washington, D.C. Cyber Crimes Unit, the FBI's Chicago and Atlanta Field Offices, and

HSI's Colorado Springs Office with additional support from the FBI's San Francisco Field Office. Trial Attorney C. Alden Pelker of the Criminal Division's Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section, Trial Attorney David Recker of the National Security Division's Counterintelligence and Export Control Section and Assistant U.S. Attorneys Zia M. Faruqui, Jessi Camille Brooks, and Christopher Brown are prosecuting the case, with assistance from Supervisory Paralegal Specialist Elizabeth Swienc and Legal Assistant Jessica McCormick.

Support to this effort was provided by FBI's San Francisco Field Office and the U.S. Attorney's Office of the Northern District of Georgia.

Support to this effort was also provided by United States Cyber Command. More information about the command's efforts to combat North Korean and other malware activity can be found on Twitter and VirusTotal.



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