

CHECKLIST · SCAMS & SECURITY

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

Published 29 September 2026. Read the full story, sources and any updates at digitaladvisors.com.au/journal/google-review-extortion-scam/

-
- ☐ **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