

A Public Safety Message from the Oakland Police Department

Recently, there have been a number of scams occurring in our area. The Oakland Police Department would like to inform and educate you as to how to handle these scams. Some of the more popular scams that are being attempted are the Grandparent scam, the IRS scam, and the Medicare for Shut In and Elderly scam. The following information is to help you identify these scams and how to handle them.

The Grandparent Scam

In this scam, a caller identifies him- or herself as a grandchild, a family member or friend, a law enforcement official, a lawyer or someone from a hospital. Usually, the caller says they're traveling in a foreign country and have gotten into a bad situation, like being arrested for drugs, involved in an accident or was mugged and needs money ASAP. The callers also ask that their parents not be contacted.

The IRS Impersonation Scam

A caller claims to be an employee of the IRS, but they are not. These con artists sound very convincing. They use fake names and ID numbers. They know a lot about their targets and have the ability to alter the caller ID to make it look like the IRS is actually calling you. The victim is told that they owe money to the IRS and it must be paid immediately or they face arrest, deportation or suspension of a business or driver's license. They attempt to have the victim pay through a preloaded debit card or wire transfer, which are almost impossible to trace.

The Medicare Program for Shut In and Elderly Scam

In this scam, an elderly or shut in person receives a call about a new "Medicare Program for Shut In and Elderly". The person says they will arrange for a "qualified team" to come out and talk to the person about the program. They attempt to gather personal information such as credit card information, social security numbers, Medicare numbers and/or banking information. They then use that information to attempt to file false claims with Medicare for services that were not provided.

The Jury Duty Scam

What happens in this scam is that the victim receives a call from individuals that claim to be US Marshalls, court officers or law enforcement officials trying to collect a fine in place of being arrested for failing to report to jury duty. You should know that these above named agencies DO NOT collect fines over the phone for failure to appear for jury duty or any other offense. In an effort to sound more "official", they use the names of actual federal judges and courthouse addresses.

It is a good practice not to give ANYONE your personal information over the phone unless you are 100% positive of the identity of the person you are speaking with. Also, DO NOT send anyone any money on a prepaid debit card or money order. Simply hang up on the caller if you receive any call of this nature. If you have any questions, you can call the police department at (201) 337-6171.