



NEWS RELEASE

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CONSUMER ALERT: Phone Scam Alert

We are getting reports of a variety of phone and mail scams targeting senior citizens in the 17th Judicial District.

The callers claim that the person either owes money, has won money or that a loved one, usually a grandchild, is in jail. Then they demand payment by Target gift cards, wire transfers or cashier's check. Most of these scams are run from outside the country. Reports of the scams have escalated in December.

If you are the victim of one of these scams, contact local law enforcement to report it.

Among the scams recently reported:

- Broomfield police report that a 90-year-old woman was contacted by a caller who claimed that she owed \$100,000 for unpaid magazine subscriptions. The caller offered to help resolve the debt. The woman sent him \$4,500 and the caller claimed he would send her a \$146,000 check to help pay off her outstanding debt. The catch? The caller said she also needed to send him \$40,000 to pay off the taxes before she could deposit the check. The woman's bank contacted police when she tried to obtain the \$40,000 cashier's check.
- Thornton police report an 81-year-old man received a letter congratulating him on winning \$880,000. The letter included a fraudulent check but instructed the man to send more than \$4,000 to pay for processing fees, which he did. Ultimately, the man's bank recognized the scam and called police.
- Aurora police reported that grandparents, who are in their 80s, lost \$22,000 in the "Grandparent Scam" in which the caller claimed their grandson was in jail and they needed to pay money to get him out. The scammers arranged for the grandparents to talk to a person claiming to be their grandson. They said they could handle the matter if they were paid \$50,000 in \$2,000 Target gift cards.

- Northglenn police reported a 72-year-old man lost \$3,800 in an internet scam which instructed him to send money orders.
- Broomfield police reported a 79-year-old woman lost \$7,000 paid to one of the phone scams.

What you should know:

- Never wire money or obtain gift cards on the promise that your payment will bring a larger pay-off to you. There is no legitimate reason for someone who is giving you money to ask that you send payments back to them.
- Unsolicited checks you receive in the mail are frequently counterfeit.
- If you are contacted by some version of the “Grandparent Scam”, stall the caller and contact your grandchild or other family members. Have them on speed dial so you can do this quickly.
- Remember that foreign lotteries and sweepstakes are illegal in the United States. You cannot be a winner of something that you did not enter.
- If you did not initiate the call, never provide personal information to the caller.
- Stall the caller. Get a phone number and tell them you will call them back. Never be pressured into sending some form of payment. Take time to check out the claims the caller is making.

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