

CURRENT SCAMS OUR RESIDENTS NEED TO BE AWARE OF

Recently we have had a rash of grandparent scams in RI; we had two in West Greenwich in the past two days. If you have an elderly parent you should make the effort to explain these scams to them, as they are usually the target in many of these scams.

“Grandparent” Scam

- Targets older adults
- Usually starts with a phone call – a con artist poses as a grandchild or a person calling on behalf of a relative in trouble and in urgent need of money.
- In every case, the caller claims that an emergency has occurred
- Recently they have been requesting cash, asking the grandparent to go to the bank and withdraw cash, usually thousands of dollars. They tell them not to tell anyone why they need the money and give you excuses to use in the event the bank questions the withdrawal. In this case they will actually send someone to your house to collect the cash.
- Other times, they will request that money be sent immediately via wire transfer.
- Sometimes the caller claims to be a lawyer or a close friend of the child, whose alleged problems range from being in prison in a foreign country, to being in a car accident, missing a wallet, losing an airline ticket, or having a credit card stolen while traveling.

Rhode Island Energy Scam

- Individuals claiming to be from Rhode Island Energy contact a business owner or a residential customer to demand immediate payment or else the company will shut off the power supply.
- In some instances, the scammers have been able to provide the customers with detailed information such as last payment date and amount.
- **REMEMBER:** While Rhode Island Energy may contact customers with past due balances by phone to offer payment options, the company **NEVER** demands direct payment immediately over the telephone.

"Windows Support" Scam

- You receive an unsolicited phone call or a flashing warning on the computer screen from individuals posing as Microsoft Windows tech support letting you know your computer has "corrupt" files and needs to be fixed.
- Caller then walks through a series of computer commands, allegedly fixing the issue, but actually installing malware or other software that allows the scam artist to remotely control your computer.

- They may also request your SS number, banking information and credit card numbers stating they need this information for your protection.

IRS Phone Scam

- Individuals claiming to represent the IRS contact taxpayers via telephone, telling you that you owe back taxes and demanding that you pay the money immediately with a pre-loaded debit card or wire transfer.
- Caller often threatens victims with arrest, deportation or suspension of a business or driver's license.
- The IRS will never call you, they communicate via mail only.

"Notice of Appearance in Court" Scam

- You receive emails claiming that you are ordered to appear in court.
- The fraudulent email with the subject line "Notice of Appearance in Court" is purportedly sent from a "court clerk" with a fictitious name instructing recipients to appear for "illegal software usage."
- The emails may also include the domain name of a legitimate law firm and contain an attachment, purportedly a copy of the court notice, which may link to a computer virus.
- The emails request that you bring an "identity document" on the specified court date.

International Lottery or Sweepstakes Scams

- Foreign lottery scam e-mails typically notify you that you've have won a large sum of money and that, in order to collect it, you must wire a processing fee using Western Union or Money Gram.
- The sender will often ask for money more than once to process the bogus winnings.

Bogus Check/Mystery Shopper Scams

- Typically, a scam artist will send an unsolicited letter or email offering you an opportunity to earn money while acting as a "secret" or "mystery" shopper.
- The scammers will then send you a legitimate-looking check with instructions for you to deposit the check at your bank, then withdraw and send back a portion to them either through a prepaid debit card or a wire transfer.
- The check, however, is bogus. You are left responsible for any bank fees associated with the bounced check and out the money you wired to the scam artist.

Contact us immediately if you have been contacted by anyone.

West Greenwich Police Department

401-397-7191