

# **DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE**

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

Date: 03 June 2020

To: All Media Outlets

Re: Scams Increasing in Number and Type over Past Few Weeks (3 page press release)

### **Details:**

The District Attorney's office has seen a sharp increase in the number and type of scams occurring in our area over the past several weeks.

As our country is dealing with issues related to Covid 19 and nationwide civil unrest, it appears scammers are taking advantage of the nation's preoccupation with these matters to advance their own criminal agendas.

In the majority of cases reported to the District Attorney's Office, the evidence suggests scammers are using information obtained from social media accounts, particularly Facebook, to lend credibility to their scams.

Scammers examine social media accounts to obtain dates of birth, places of employment, phone numbers, pet names, nicknames and the names of family members and friends to develop and advance a convincing scam intended to steal money from our residents.

Spoofing a phone number allows the scammer to show any agency name, personal name or phone number they choose in the intended victim's caller ID.

The scammer's ultimate goal is to steal money from you by scaring you into making an immediate payment to avoid arrest or by convincing you that certain information is needed from you to complete what seems to be a legitimate transaction. In such cases, scammers attempt to obtain your date of birth, social security number, credit card number or bank account information in order to obtain money from those accounts.

Other common scams involve sending you a bogus (but authentic looking) check with a request that you cash it and send a certain amount of the proceeds back to the scammer in order to obtain a prize or other financial benefit.

Many scammers pretend to be employed by the Social Security Administration, Internal Revenue Service, or a law enforcement agency. They do this to lend authority to their demands or requests. This type of scammer usually threatens to have you arrested if a certain fine or fee isn't paid immediately.

Because of the scammers ability to "spoof" a phone call, every call should be considered highly

suspicious and the information displayed in your caller ID should be treated with equal suspicion. Grandkid scams are on the rise in our area. These scammers will call you pretending to be a grandchild who was involved in an accident or recently arrested. The intent of this scammer is to obtain money from you, which is need to post bail or pay a fine. These incidents are emotionally charged events intended to instill a sense of urgency in you. Scammers frequently use information obtained from your Facebook account, or other social media accounts, to promote and complete this scam.

### **Scams - Online Education**

Every citizen should take the time to educate themselves on scams by visiting [www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov) and click on "scam alerts". This website will provide you with information on all current, past and evolving scams.

### **Online Reporting of Internet and Phone Scams**

Citizens having access to the internet should report **Internet Scams** to the FBI (online) by visiting [www.ic3.gov](http://www.ic3.gov) and clicking on the "File a Complaint" tab. You will also see a tab you can click to view Consumer Alerts.

Citizens are encouraged to visit [www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov](http://www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov) to report **Phone Scams** of all types including spam, imposter scams, employment scams, identity theft, robocalls and telemarketing complaints. From this website, citizens can also access the National Do Not Call Registry. You can add your phone number to this registry, which will assist in reducing the number of phone calls from telemarketers. This will do nothing to stop scammers from calling you .

### **Reporting IRS Scams**

IRS Imposter Scams can be reported online at [www.irs.gov/uac/report-phishing](http://www.irs.gov/uac/report-phishing).

### **Free Pamphlets and Brochures Available to the Public**

The District Attorney's Office offers free pamphlets to citizens wishing to educate themselves on a large variety of scams. These pamphlets and brochures are located on tables on the first and second floor of the Northumberland County Courthouse, 201 Market Street, Sunbury, Pa.

### **Social Media Accounts**

For increased privacy and personal security, you may want to consider deleting or deactivating your social media accounts. Facebook is routinely used by scammers to gather information on you. If you choose to deactivate or delete your Facebook account, visit [https://www.facebook.com/help/250563911970368?helpref=hc\\_global\\_nav](https://www.facebook.com/help/250563911970368?helpref=hc_global_nav).

### **Enhancing Security of Internet Accounts and Cell Phone**

Use strong passwords (a combination of numbers, upper and lower case letters and symbols) for all of your accounts. Using a password manager will allow you to create strong passwords for all of your accounts allowing you to memorize only the password needed to access the password manager. Many good choices for password managers are free, secure and available from trusted companies.



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