

Office of the Hunterdon County Prosecutor

MICHAEL J. WILLIAMS
ACTING PROSECUTOR



FRANK R. CRISOLOGO
ACTING CHIEF OF DETECTIVES

PAUL T. APPROVATO
ACTING DEPUTY CHIEF OF DETECTIVES

Justice Center, 2nd Floor
65 Park Avenue
PO Box 756
Flemington, NJ 08822-0756

Telephone 908-788-1129
Fax 908-806-4618

www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/prosecutor.htm

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INCREASED REPORTS OF SCAM THEFTS

Acting Hunterdon County Prosecutor Michael J. Williams and Acting Chief of Detectives Frank R. Crisologo are alerting the public to a recent increase in confidence schemes.

According to Acting Prosecutor Williams, “The recent rise in scams is not isolated to Hunterdon County alone; the surrounding counties are also experiencing this surge in crime. In the most recent instance, a victim received a telephone call from a man claiming to be a bail bondsman. During the conversation, a female subject began speaking with the victim and pretended to be the victim’s granddaughter. The victim was convinced, and gave cash to a supposed attorney for the granddaughter. The man, who gave the name “George Reid,” was described as a young, tall, white male with no facial hair. A blue vehicle was used in the commission of the crime.”

Nearly all confidence schemes revolve around the victim sending money, disclosing account information, or disclosing other personal information such as passwords. If you received unsolicited communications either by e-mail or telephone that involve money, credit cards, Pay pal, gift cards, wire transfers, social security, bank accounts, or any other account information, it likely is some type of scheme to steal either your money or your identity in an effort to access your accounts.

By following a few simple precautions, most people can avoid becoming a victim of a confidence scheme.

E-mails: Do not reply to e-mails or links attached to unsolicited e-mails.

Telephone Callers: Do not engage in conversations with anyone you do not know, especially about money.

Verify: If you are suspicious, call the company or agency being represented using the official listing for their customer service.

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Scare tactics: these are used by thieves to demand money or personal information via telephone calls, e-mails, threats of bad credit, arrest, investigation, or an audit from an alleged governmental agency. These are all scams meant to scare an unsuspecting person into rushing and hastily fulfilling a demand.

According to Acting Prosecutor Williams, "While the threat to our senior citizens is of great concern because of their vulnerabilities and trusting nature, it is important that all citizens remain alert to these types of criminal activity. Citizens who receive suspicious calls or e-mails demanding money should contact their local police department and report the incident. Vigilance is important. In law enforcement, our best weapon against crime is an educated and knowledgeable public. We encourage citizens to spread the information via their social media and to discuss it with their families and neighbors."

Anonymous tips can be submitted by calling Crime Stoppers at 1-800-321-0010, going online at www.CrimeStoppersHunterdon.com or through the free "P3 Tips" smartphone app. All tips are anonymous and kept confidential.

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