

NEWS RELEASE



GARDEN CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Police Commissioner Kenneth Jackson and the Garden City Police Department alert all residents regarding the prevalence of phone, email, and computer scams. During these scams, victims are financially targeted via telephone, email, or text by someone who makes false statements and promises in an effort to manipulate them into sending money by way of gift cards, illegal money transfers, Green Dot Money Packs, Money Grams, Western Union, and pre-paid money cards. Legitimate agencies do not ask for these types of payments.

Examples of phone scams include:

IRS Scams

The victim receives a phone call from an individual claiming to be an IRS Agent who informs the victim that they owe money for unpaid taxes. This call can also be in the form of an automated call. The caller informs the victim that they are subject to arrest, foreclosure, or driver's license suspension unless they submit a payment. The IRS states they do not ask for credit card numbers over the phone. They also state that they do not ask for payment via gift cards, wire transfers, or pre-paid debit cards. These scammers often use common names and badge numbers to sound legitimate. They may know the last four digits of your Social Security number, send you backup emails, or have another person call you to support the initial scammer's call. If you think you may owe back taxes, contact the IRS directly at (800) 829-1040.

Prize or Lottery Winners

The caller advises the victim they have won a monetary prize, but a payment from the victim is required to cover the shipping and processing fees for delivery of the winnings.

Utility Companies

The caller states they are from a utility (gas, electric, water) and require payment to prevent the victim's service from being disconnected.

Government Scams

Victims often receive a call from someone stating they are from Nassau County or another jurisdiction, where they are advised to pay a fine or face arrest for not reporting for jury duty.

Arrested Family Members

The victim, often an elderly person, receives a call from a person claiming to be a family member (grandchild, niece, nephew, etc.) who advises the victim they were arrested and require payment, usually by way of gift cards, credit cards, or wired money for bail, fines, or lawyer fees. The call may also come from a person claiming to be the arresting officer or the lawyer for the family member. These scams are often foiled when the victim contacts the family member, particularly by cell phone.

Business Scam

Employees receive an email designed to appear as if their boss asked them to make a wire transfer from the company's account to a new account to complete a transaction. Employees have also received emails designed to appear as if it was from their boss asking them to purchase gift cards for customers or clients. Once the gift cards are purchased, the victim is asked to email the gift card number and the activation code.

Computer Scam

Victims will get a pop-up message on their screen stating there is a problem with their computer and advising them to call the posted phone number for a technician. The victim will then call the number and be advised that their bank account has been compromised and they need to transfer their funds by wire, cryptocurrency, or other means to a new account that has been set up for them. In most cases, the funds are irretrievable if the transaction is completed. In other computer scams, the owner is instructed to allow technicians to access their computer, and once inside, they steal their identity and/or funds from their accounts. If someone is experiencing computer issues, they should contact a local trusted repair person.

Checks

Persons who write checks should utilize security-certified checks and write with special gel ink pens that make it difficult for criminals to whitewash or remove the ink from the checks to help prevent criminals from entering new amounts and recipients. This is particularly important when you place checks in the mail.

ATM Identity Theft

Persons should be aware if a skimming device has been placed on an ATM before entering their card and notify authorities immediately if they suspect one has been attached. ATM users are also advised to cover the keypad to protect their identity when entering their PIN code.

Protect your Identity

Everyone should take all necessary precautions to protect their identity. This includes keeping your social security card and other important identification documents in a safe, secure place. Old bills or financial statements should be shredded before discarding them. Never give out your social security number or other important personal information over the phone or via text, email, or web notification to someone who contacts you regarding issues with your credit card or bank accounts. The Department recommends that, in these instances, call the number on your credit card and/or bank statement to check the status of your accounts.

If you think you have been a victim of a scam, please get in touch with the Police Department by dialing 911.