

Scams come in a variety of shapes and sizes, and continue to threaten our community on a daily basis. Remember, the police department is here to help answer any of your questions, and you are not bothering us! It takes significantly less time to help you stop a scam in its tracks than conduct an investigation into the scammer.

Here are some common schemes:

1. The scammer poses to be a member of your family that is in trouble and is in need of assistance. They request that you send money or other items with cash value (gift cards) in order for your relative's safe return or release from custody.

SCAM: Ask the scammer for a phone number where you can return the call, then hang up and call your family member that is supposedly in trouble – most likely, he or she is just fine. If you have any reason to believe that one of your family members is in danger, call 9-1-1 immediately.

2. Any company or government agency asks you to pay by wire transfer (Western Union, MoneyGram, etc.) or by purchasing money cards or gift cards and reading the account numbers over the phone.

SCAM: If it doesn't make sense, then it is probably a scam. In all of your dealings, have you ever paid for your taxes, cable or electricity using a gift card?

3. The scammer sends you a check for too much money and requests that you deposit it. Then, tells you to use the remainder of the money to make a refund or pay someone else.

SCAM: The check is bad and will bounce after you use your hard-earned money to cover the difference.

4. A private company such as an electric utility, cable company, phone company or many others, calls you and tells you that you owe a significant amount of money and that your service will be disconnected immediately if you do not pay.

SCAM: Most companies will not do this. Make sure to check directly with your utility provider using independently verified contact information (from their website or a previous bill).

5. Any websites, emails or unsolicited calls that attempt to gather your personal information.

SCAM: In the digital age, scammers can re-create emails and phone numbers from people and businesses you know. Just because it looks like it came from your favorite store at the mall or the phone number is from your cable company, does not mean that it actually is. The best strategy is to stop the call and find independent contact information to call them back.

6. The scammer calls or emails with a deal that is "too good to be true."

SCAM: Deals that are too good to be true usually are. Make sure to check your facts before giving up your hard-earned cash. Often times, a simple Internet search for the phone number, company or deal rapidly reveals a scam.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us at (610) 282-3064, and be sure to call 9-1-1 for emergencies.