

Charity Phone Scam Alert

In the wake of critical incidents in Ventura County the Ventura Police Department encourages residents to be aware of scams that often follow disasters. The scammers often play on the emotions of people especially during major incidents.

If you are asked to make a charitable donation, please consider these tips:

- Donate to charities you know and trust.
- Be alert for charities that seem to have sprung up overnight.
- Do not give out personal or financial information including your credit card or bank account number unless you know the charity is reputable.
- Never send cash by mail.
- Be suspicious of random calls requesting a donation.
- Be cautious about clicking on links in emails requesting a donation.
- Check out a charity before you donate by contacting the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance at 703-276-0100 or at website www.give.org

The community is also advised to be aware of additional phone scams that have impacted residents:

- **IRS Scam:** The scammer says money is owed and must be paid immediately by phone.
- **Edison/Gas Scam:** The scammer says money is owed and if not paid immediately the service will be turned off.
- **Jury Duty Scam:** The scammer says money is owed for not showing up to jury duty and if not paid jail time will occur.
- **"Can You Hear Me" Scam:** Scammers are calling victims hoping to get them to say the word "yes" during the conversation that's being recorded. The scammer will later use the recording of the victim saying yes to authorize unwanted charges on the victim's utility or credit card account.
- **Text Message Phishing Scam:** Scammers are using a new texting scam and spoofing banks' phone numbers and sending text messages to customers. A spoofed phone number hides the actual number the text is coming from and displays a number from a trusted source, like your bank. The text claims that your debit card has been used to make a purchase and if you do not recognize the transaction, you need to call their fraud prevention helpline. A phone number is provided for you to call. Because the incoming text looks like it's from your bank, people are falling for this. If you do call the number provided in the text, the fraudster will answer the phone. They will then ask you to confirm your sensitive banking details. This would allow the scammer to steal money from your account.
- **Grandparent Scam:** A scammer poses as a grandchild and claims to be in jail and in need of money for bail. These imposters claim they are in another state or out of the country and need money wired to help bail them out of jail.

The community is urged to be vigilant and aware of these scams to avoid falling victim. Never follow directions from someone on the phone that requests personal information or money. Please report phone and computer scams to the Federal Trade Commission at 1-877-FTC-HELP or visit ftc.gov/complaint.