



NEWS RELEASE

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Community Crime Alert

Ventura Police Report an Increase in Phone Scams

Ventura, Calif. — The Ventura Police Department (VPD) wants to warn residents about a rise in phone scams in the last three months. Community members have reported being pressured to make payments by phone, power shutoff or cellular service terminations, identity theft calls, and jail time threats.

“The community is urged to be vigilant in protecting personal information and aware of these scams to avoid falling victim. Never follow directions from someone over the phone that requests immediate payment, “or else,” commented Sergeant Edward Caliento.

Since June 2020, reported scams have increased by 60 percent, compared to the previous four months. Of 168 reported calls, 35 resulted in financial loss. Most of the reported incidents involved a scammer trying to frighten residents into sending cash, credit card information, or bank account numbers over the phone.

The community is also advised to be aware of several other frequent types of phone scams. These scams can include calls from people claiming to be from the IRS, a Gas and Electric company, the Social Security office, Medicare, text messaging phishing, targeting grandparents, and QR code related scams. To learn more, visit <https://www.cityofventura.ca.gov/1632/Crime-Prevention> or click here.

To reduce the risk of becoming victims of this type of crime, review the following crime prevention tips:

1. Sign-up for free scam alerts from the FTC at ftc.gov/scams.
2. Spot imposters: Scammers often pretend to be government officials or family members. Always ask for identification or ask questions to verify who they are.
3. Verify an agency by researching online searches.
4. Don't trust caller ID.
5. Don't pay upfront for anything.
6. Consider the type of payment used for transactions. Most credit cards have significant fraud protection built-in and are safer to use.
7. Talk to someone. Scammers want the public to make decisions in a hurry and often threaten people to make hasty decisions. Slow down, check the story, and consult an expert – or just tell a friend.
8. Hang up on robocalls.
9. Be skeptical about free trial offers.
10. Don't deposit a check and wire money.

If you believe you have been the victim of a scam and have suffered financial loss, contact the Ventura Police Department at (805) 339-4400. For all other scam-related calls, please report calls to the Federal Trade Commission at 1-877-FTC-HELP or visit ftc.gov/complaint.