



Scenic Pacifica
Incorporated Nov. 22, 1957

CITY OF PACIFICA

Pacifica Police Department

2075 Coast Highway • Pacifica, California 94044-3038
(T) 650-738-7314 • (F) 650-355-1172 • www.pacificapolice.org

MAYOR
Mike O'Neill

MAYOR PRO TEM
John Keener

COUNCIL
Sue Digre
Sue Vaterlaus
Deirdre Martin

PRESS RELEASE

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Don't Become the Victim of a Scam

Pacifica, CA- The Pacifica Police Department recently received a call from a concerned citizen. The citizen had gotten a call from someone claiming to be their grandchild. The supposed grandchild claimed to have an emergency and needed money right away! The resident was quite alert, asked some specific questions, and was able to determine that this was a scam. In other such cases, the ending hasn't been so good. People have been conned into sending thousands of dollars via money exchanges, never to see their hard-earned savings again.

The Pacifica Police Department wants to provide citizens with information that can help them from becoming victims. The following tips come from the Federal Trade Commission:

1. **Spot imposters.** Scammers often pretend to be someone you trust, like a government official, a family member, a charity, or a company you do business with. Don't send money or give out personal information in response to an unexpected request — whether it comes as a text, a phone call, or an email.
2. **Do online searches.** Type a company or product name into your favorite search engine with words like "review," "complaint" or "scam." Or search for a phrase that describes your situation, like "IRS call." You can even search for phone numbers to see if other people have reported them as scams.
3. **Don't believe your caller ID.** Technology makes it easy for scammers to fake caller ID information, so the name and number you see aren't always real. If someone calls asking for money or personal information, hang up. If you think the caller might be telling the truth, call back to a number you know is genuine.
4. **Don't pay upfront for a promise.** Someone might ask you to pay in advance for things like debt relief, credit and loan offers, mortgage assistance, or a job. They might even say you've won a prize, but first you have to pay taxes or fees. If you do, they will probably take the money and disappear.

5. **Consider how you pay.** Credit cards have significant fraud protection built in, but some payment methods don't. Wiring money through services like Western Union or MoneyGram is risky because it's nearly impossible to get your money back. That's also true for reloadable cards like MoneyPak, Reloadit or Vanilla. Government offices and honest companies won't require you to use these payment methods.
6. **Talk to someone.** Before you give up your money or personal information, talk to someone you trust. Con artists want you to make decisions in a hurry. They might even threaten you. Slow down, check out the story, do an online search, consult an expert — or just tell a friend.
7. **Hang up on robocalls.** If you answer the phone and hear a recorded sales pitch, hang up and report it to the FTC. These calls are illegal, and often the products are bogus. Don't press 1 to speak to a person or to be taken off the list. That could lead to more calls.
8. **Be skeptical about free trial offers.** Some companies use free trials to sign you up for products and bill you every month until you cancel. Before you agree to a free trial, research the company and read the cancellation policy. And always review your monthly statements for charges you don't recognize.
9. **Don't deposit a check and wire money back.** If you are sent a check as part of a business proposition, scammers will often tell you to keep some for yourself, and wire some of the money back to them. By law, banks must make funds from deposited checks available within days, but uncovering a fake check can take weeks. If a check you deposit turns out to be a fake, you're responsible for repaying the bank.

Sign up for free scam alerts from the FTC at ftc.gov/scams. Get the latest tips and advice about scams sent right to your inbox. If you spot a scam, report it at ftc.gov/complaint. Your reports help the FTC and other law enforcement investigate scams and bring crooks to justice.

Daniel Steidle
Chief of Police

Contact:
Captain Joe Spanheimer
Pacifica Police Department
2075 Coast Highway
Pacifica, CA 94044
650-738-7314
spanheimerj@pacificapolice.org