



Crime Bulletin

Scams & Cons



Scam and con artists have been around for decades. In the past, these acts were committed in person more often than not. With the prevalence of technology, scam artists are targeting and victimizing people more than ever! There are several scams or cons that are quite popular and many Wisconsin residents fall victim each year. Below is a list of some of those scams.

Home Repair

A company approaches with a claim of “left over building materials” and offers to perform the work at a discount. They may ask for a substantial deposit and never return or if they actually do the work, it is of substandard quality. You should be very skeptical of someone just stopping by inquiring if you would like to have work done. Typically, people will solicit bids from local companies if they want some work performed. For some reason if you choose to do business with them, ask for their business license and never hand over any deposit money until you have “checked them out.”

Collect Call/Emergency scam

You receive a collect call late at night from someone purporting to be a family member, hospital employee, police officer, etc. They explain that a loved one has been hurt, in an accident, arrested, etc. and they need your credit card number to complete the call. After card number is received the person states that it won't go through and hangs up. You should NEVER give out your personal information over the phone unless YOU initiated the phone call.

Nigerian Scam

There are many different type of these, but they all have the same pitch. You receive a letter or email from some foreign national stating that they have received a great sum of money, but need to export it in order to keep. They ask for access to your bank account in order to “funnel” the money and promise to give you a cut of the money. You need to understand that these are all scams!! Never give out your bank account info to anyone!

Vehicle/large item sale

You place an ad for a car for sale. A buyer emerges and sends you a cashier's check that is over the sale amount. The buyer apologizes for the mistake and states that he trusts you and asks that you send the overage amount back to him when you ship the vehicle/item. These are all scams! The cashier's check will turn out to be fraudulent and you will be responsible for that amount.

Phishing

Theses scams are usually done through emails. An email is sent by someone purporting to be from a legitimate company (Ebay, PayPal, etc.) and asks you to verify your personal information by “clicking” on a link. This leads to a very real looking bogus site. NEVER give out your information, call the company using the phone number for their actual website or from your statement, etc.

Charity Scams

All of us receive the phone calls and mailings from different charitable organizations. Although some of these charities are legitimate, there are an equal number that are not. If you wish to make a charitable donation, either contact the charity directly or go through one of the many local charitable organizations in your community.

If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!