



For Immediate Release, April 10, 2014

WICHITA, KAN. – Recent scams reported to the District Attorney’s Consumer Protection Division:

1. A caller claims to be the consumer’s grandson who has been arrested while in another country. The grandparents are asked to send bail money to get the grandchild out of jail.
2. A man who says he’s a computer technician calls to say a home computer is sending “error codes” and wants remote access to the computer to fix the problem. If access is allowed, the scam artist may reach personal financial information the consumer has stored in the computer.
3. An automated call is received saying the consumer’s credit card has been deactivated. The consumer must go through a series of prompts to have the card reinstated. The prompts require personal financial information.
4. A caller says he’s with the IRS and the consumer has committed a tax fraud. To prevent a warrant from being issued, the scam artist wants the person to immediately send money to clear up the matter.
5. Caller says, “You missed jury duty and a warrant is about to be issued for your arrest.” The caller demands you purchase a prepaid money card to take care of the fine.

All of these scams have one thing in common...the telephone. A report from the National Consumers League shows more than 36% of the complaints filed in 2013 were for scams that started with a phone call, up from 25% the previous year. This was the first time in several years the telephone was the number one method of contact for trying to defraud the public - more than email, text messages and the U.S. Postal Service.

Possible reasons for the increase in telephone scams are:

1. Internet calling technology (Voice Over Internet Protocol) allows scammers to make calls from anywhere in the world and to mask their identity from law enforcement.
2. By using automatic dialers, fraudulent telemarketers can repeatedly call until a person finally answers.
3. Software allows scammers to display any name on your caller ID to hide their true identity and prevent you from calling back. This is referred to as a “spoof” call.

Treat every call with suspicion. If you have not initiated the call, NEVER give out personal financial information over the phone. If you have questions about any consumer-related transaction, contact the Consumer Protection Division of the District Attorney’s Office at 316-660-3653.

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