

## **NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** \_\_\_\_\_

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### **POLICE WARN OF GIFT CARD SCAMS**

SUFFOLK, VA (June 17, 2020) The Suffolk Police Department asks everyone to please beware of scams involving gift cards.

Gift card scams are becoming more common with the increased use of technology and the convenience these cards provide to consumers. Scammers often target the elderly and/or kind-hearted people by contacting them either by phone, e-mail, or social media. Scammers will contact victims and tell them false stories involving the health or well-being of a family member. They also devise stories about the victim's computer being locked and threaten that it cannot be accessed until paying the person who contacted them. Another ploy is callers pretending to be from a utility company, telling you to pay your bill by gift card or they'll cut off your power or water.

The scammers will then ask the victim to purchase multiple gift cards from a business like Amazon, eBay, etc. Once these cards are purchased, the scammer will ask for the victim to scratch the back of the card to reveal a redemption code. Once the scammers obtain that code, they are able to access the funds.

The Suffolk Police Department warns that if you are contacted by someone you suspect to be a scammer, do not purchase the gift cards for them. If you believe a

family member is in danger, try to contact them or the local jurisdiction where the family member resides to check on their wellbeing. You may also contact the Suffolk Police Department at the non-emergency number, 757-923-2350, and speak with an Officer.

If you have paid a scammer with the gift card, contact the company on the gift card and advise them of the scam. You can also refer to the Federal Trade Commission website at [www.ftc.gov/giftcards](http://www.ftc.gov/giftcards) for further information and contact numbers for various large companies.

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