

Newport Beach Police Department

SCAM REMINDERS November 1, 2023

Two types of phone scams came up last month that I wanted to highlight along with some reminders about how to spot & avoid these scams.

The first one was the **"Jury Duty Scam"**. In this situation, the victim received a call from two individuals claiming to be with the Sheriff's Department who told her that she needed to send them \$15,000 or go to jail for missing jury duty. The Caller ID on the phone looked like it was from the Sheriff's Department, and it even sounded like there was police radio traffic in the background of the call. Although the victim had some suspicions that this was a scam, she felt pressured to act quickly to avoid going to jail and sent the suspects over \$3,000. Shortly after sending the money, she realized it was a scam and called NBPD report the incident.

The second was the **"Animal Shelter Scam"**. In this case, residents received calls from an individual claiming to be a Newport Beach Animal Shelter employee. The caller claimed their lost pet had been found then asked them for payment over the phone. Residents who contacted the Animal Shelter directly were able to confirm that these calls did not come from their department.

When you get a call from an unknown number, ask yourself... is the caller who you think it is? Scammers are good at pretending to be someone they're not. They can be convincing; sometimes manipulating Caller ID, using information from social media, or hacking into email accounts, to make it seem more real. They'll pressure you or play on your emotions to get personal information or money from you.

Here's what you can do when you get a call from someone you don't know:

1. **Stop. Check it out.** For calls from alleged government agencies or utility companies: Do not give out any personal or financial information until you have verified the identity of the caller. Ask the caller for their name, department, business phone number and what they are requesting. Confirm that information by calling the organization directly at a phone number found on the internet or through official correspondence/billing statements. If the caller refuses to provide this information, terminate the call immediately.
2. **Keep your information safe.** Never give out personal identifying information, such as your social security number, bank account or credit card account numbers, to anyone you do not know.
3. **Pass this information on to a friend.** You may not have received one of these calls, but chances are that you know someone who will - if they haven't already.