

Internal Revenue Service Phone Scam Follow-Up

In recent months area residents have been targeted by people posing as agents from the Internal Revenue Service. The "agents" call the residents home telephone and try to convince the victim that they owe money in taxes and will face prison time and fines if they do not immediately wire money to a location designated by the "agent."

Recently we have learned that the people perpetrating these crimes are using technology to conceal their telephone number and substitute it with phone numbers that appear legitimate when they are displayed on caller ID units. In some cases telephone numbers for local police departments have been used which have resulted in the victim believing the call was legitimate.

Residents are reminded that the Internal Revenue Service will not call you to discuss tax deficiencies or issues. They will correspond with you through regular U.S. mail. This rule also applies to power companies such as JCPL, PSE&G, and NJ Natural Gas.

Be very cautious when receiving calls in which anyone asks you to send money. There are virtually no scenarios in which you should agree to send money to someone you don't know. **In addition to the IRS scam, the callers will also try and convince you that you have won a lottery.** Many people are overcome with emotion when hearing this news and fail to think clearly thereafter. The victim is told they need to wire a sum of money for administrative fees before their lottery check can be delivered to them. Millions of dollars have been stolen from unsuspecting victims who have fallen prey to this scam.

Senior citizens are specifically targeted by these criminals. They represent a large percentage of the victim pool.

Residents are strongly encouraged to speak with elderly relatives and discuss this scam and to include specific instructions to how to avoid becoming a victim. You may also want to speak with the banking institution used by your relative and discuss with them any preventative measures they may have available to prevent this type of crime.

If you believe you have been the victim of this type of criminal activity you should contact your local Police Department and file a report. Keep in mind that most of these scams originate out of the country and prosecution is extremely difficult.

Captain Paul Nigro