

The Monterey County Sheriff's Office is warning the public and businesses about the many possible scams targeting both.

- Be alert to telephone and internet scams.
- Be wary of a caller who uses threats in an attempt to get you to pay a fine or send money.
- They will ask you to wire money via Western Union. They will then ask you to call them immediately after you have wired the money where they have directed you to send it to. The reason for this is they have someone in place at that office that will immediately retrieve the money the instant you send it. This makes it harder to stop a transfer once you find out it is fraudulent.
- Most of the time, if you send money initially at their request, they will call you back a short time later asking for more money.
- They may also ask you to purchase a Green Dot card at a business like CVS/Pharmacy and load it with a designated amount of money.
- Often the Caller ID on a telephone will show a name of a legitimate agency. This is known as "spoofing".

- **The Jury Duty Scam**

The caller tells the intended victim they failed to show up for a jury summons, and a bench warrant had been issued for their arrest. But if the send money to pay the fine, the judge would show leniency.

- **The Grandson Scam (or Borderline Scam)**

The caller says they are the intended victim's grandson. They have been in a car accident across the border in Canada (or Mexico) and have been arrested and need bail money. Often you will unknowingly provide them with your grandson's name. The caller will say "Hi grandma/grandpa it's your grandson." Your immediate unconscious response is usually "Jeffrey?" "Yes, grandma, it's me Jeffrey."

- **The CIA Scam**

The caller will tell the intended victim they are from the CIA and their spouse is in serious trouble and money is needed to help them out of the trouble.

- **The Invoice Scam**

Fraudulent invoices are sent to businesses for fire inspections or toner/office supplies. Often these invoices will be paid by the business. It is then later discovered that no fire inspection was ever done (nor that it was even a legitimate company.) Or the invoice is not from the company you order supplies from and you have not receive the supplies listed on the invoice.

BUSINESS INVOICE SCAMS-Additional Information

The type of scam targets business offices. Your company receives an invoice for toner cartridges for your copier or fax machine. The accounting department will automatically pay the invoice since those are common supplies frequently ordered by your company. However, it is then discovered that this isn't the company you normally purchase supplies from, nor did you ever receive the office supplies invoiced.

Another variation of this scam is where they contact an employee in purchasing. The employee believes they are speaking to their usual office supplies provider. This person will offer the employee products at reduced or current prices in anticipation of impending rate increases. The employee places the order and after the fraudulent invoice is paid; your company never receives the supplies it purchased.

Even though the loss initially is only a few hundred dollars, if the company has insufficient internal controls the company could continue to be victimized

Criminals exploit lax controls that may exist in companies in hopes that phony invoices will be paid without a second look. But there are steps your business can take to protect themselves.

- Educate your employees—especially personnel in accounts payable/receivable about common fraud schemes.
- Take a minute to carefully look over invoices before they are paid. Make sure that services and/or products have been received or work has been completed. Also, make sure the company is someone you do business with.

These websites have more information on the various types of scams.

<http://www.usa.gov/topics/consumer/scams-fraud.shtml>

www.fbi.gov/scams-safety

click on Scams & Safety, then the “Be Crime Smart” section.

<http://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0076-phone-scams>

If you are a victim, immediately contact your local law enforcement agency

You can also file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission at www.ftc.gov