



PLYMOUTH POLICE DEPARTMENT

CRIME ALERTS:

Scams and Fraud: Over the past year, we have taken 32 reports of fraud. Many of these scams were targeted at our seniors. Most scams attempt to gain access to your personal information or financial accounts. Some pose as customer support for businesses like Microsoft, Apple or public utilities. Others pose as government agencies such as the IRS, Federal Trade Commission or other law enforcement. And some target people trying to sell things on Facebook Market, eBay or Craigslist.

Plymouth residents lost over \$84,000 dollars last year to these scams. The average victim lost \$5,612. And that is just in the City of Plymouth, Wisconsin!

The following tips can help you avoid scams:

- A. Don't answer telephone calls from phone numbers you don't recognize. They will leave a message if it is important.
- B. Don't open emails or text messages from people or companies you didn't expect to receive a message from. And don't open attachments from anyone you don't know.
- C. Government agencies, like the IRS, only initiate contact through the U.S. Mail. They do not send emails or texts to people who owe taxes!
- D. No branch of law enforcement in the U.S. will ever ask you to pay for us to investigate a crime! And we don't expect you to pay with gift cards, bitcoin or gold.
- E. No legitimate company expects you to pay for services with prepaid gift cards. Prepaid gift cards are for gifts. Give them to your kids or friends.
- F. Be sure of phone numbers for tech support or customer support before you call them. Don't take the first telephone number that pops up in Google. Those are often the fake ones that take you to scammers posing as legitimate businesses. Find the number on your bill or other correspondence from the company.
- G. Never, ever give out your social security number over the phone or computer.
- H. Don't provide login or password information to anyone. If it is a company you have done business with, they already have that information. And they won't ask you for it.
- I. If anyone tells you they will send you more money than you asked for and want you to send back the extra, IT IS A SCAM!!!!!! No one does that!
- J. Don't ever agree to withdraw thousands from the bank and give it to some guy you've never met. Especially if they tell you to stay on the phone with them while you withdraw the money.

Finally, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. If you think you are being scammed, get a call back number and call your local police. We will help you figure out if it is legitimate or a scam.