

DATE: March 30, 2012
RELEASE DATE: March 30, 2012
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HEMET POLICE SEEING UPSWING IN FRAUD ATTEMPTS

HEMET, CA - The Hemet Police Department is currently experiencing an increase in calls from citizens asking if certain phone solicitations are legitimate. Alarming, many of these calls are from citizens who have already sent money or personal information and are calling to confirm they have been victimized.

Many of these victims had a “gut feeling” something was wrong, but the idea of winning millions, getting something for free, or helping a relative in need overwhelmed their rational thinking. Targets of these scams are often elderly who may become confused by fast-talking scam artists. The suspect and may even call the victim by name. Sadly, many of these illegal operations are based out of the country and are difficult for law enforcement.

Examples of some of the scams the Hemet Police Department is receiving calls about are:

Publishers Clearing House – Suspect(s) call victim and tell them they have won the drawing. To collect this money, the victim is asked to pay for “tax” and/or “fees” based on the amount won.

Jamaican (or other country) Lottery – Suspect(s) call victim and tell them they have won the drawing. To collect this money, the victim is asked to pay for “tax” and/or “fees” based on the amount won. In some cases, the suspect says they have won the lottery, but for some reason, they need help collecting the money. They offer to give the majority of the money if the victim will advance them a small portion.

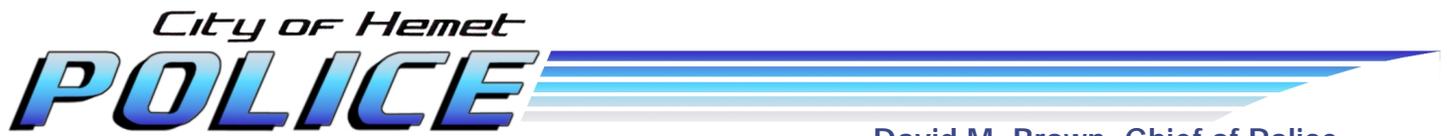
California Earthquake Inspection / Repair – Suspect(s) call the victim and may even know victim’s address. Suspect tells victim that repairs need to be completed or have already been completed on their home. Suspect then demands payment for these “services” (that were never completed and never will be completed).

Lost / Injured / Arrested Relative – Suspect(s) call the victim and claim to be a relative; usually a grandson/granddaughter. Suspect tells victim they have been arrested and need money sent to a certain location so they can get out. Other variations include they are in the hospital and do not have their insurance card or they are lost and need money for their damaged car and hotel stay. Many times, they will say, “*Grandma?...Do you know who this is?*” Based on the response, the suspect now claims to be that person.

As stated earlier, these operations are often based in other countries and that poses a significant problem for law enforcement. The Hemet Police Department urges citizens to trust their gut and not give any personal information or money to these criminals. If a relative is really in trouble, you can call them to verify. If you won a sweepstakes or lottery, you will not be asked to “pay” to win. If you did not call a contractor for earthquake repair for your home, you need not pay for inspection and/or “work.”

General knowledge resources or assistance for victims can be found at:

Phone Busters - Canadian based anti-fraud resource that partners with global law enforcement agencies.



David M. Brown, Chief of Police

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www.phonebusters.com or (888-495-8501)

The Better Business Bureau - www.bbb.org

CA Identity Theft Registry - <http://ag.ca.gov/idtheft/general.php>

Federal Trade Commission - www.ftc.gov/bcp/menus/consumer/phone/scams.shtm
(Telemarketing Scams)