



Mark A. Matsuda  
Chief of Police

# BULLETIN



## TORRANCE POLICE DEPARTMENT CRIME ANALYSIS

3300 Civic Center Drive • Torrance, CA 90503 • TEL: 310.618.5528 • FAX: 310.618.6361 • SKramer@TorranceCA.Gov

### SCAM TRENDS – 07/18/16

**SCAM** – An executive secretary or finance officer receives an email from the “President/CEO” of the company requesting a “wire transfer” of funds for payment of product or service. The email address from the President/CEO is very similar to the authentic email address assigned. Often, the President/CEO is out of the country and the content of the email contains accurate names and information about the company and the request appears legitimate. Most of these scams originate in China, Japan, Russia and Canada.

**SCAM** – The callers identify themselves as a Police Officer/Detective with a local law enforcement agency (TPD) telling them they failed to turn up for jury duty advising that a warrant for their arrest has been issued. They instruct the victim to obtain a Pre-Paid Visa, MasterCard, or Green Dot card at a local retail store (CVS, Walgreens, etc.) for several hundred dollars or more. Once the victim obtains the Pre-Paid Card they are instructed to scratch off the serial number/security code on the reverse and give it to the caller. With this information the caller now loads the money onto a new card or into a new account such as PayPal.

**SCAM** – The caller claims to be a representative from a Utility Company (SCE, GAS, WATER) advising you are late on payment and if you don't immediately pay your bill, utilities will be shut off. Again, the instruction is to obtain a Pre-Paid Debit Card and follow the instructions noted above.

**SCAM** – The caller claims to be a representative from the “City of Torrance/Civil Engineering” or another department within that city. They advise that their residence needs to buy plumbing or electrical upgrades to comply with city requirements according to City Manager “LeRoy Jackson”. The caller often uses the names of current city employees as leverage. Again, they are instructed to obtain a Pre-Paid Debit Card and follow the instructions noted above. (Recent PV Case)

**SCAM** – The callers identify themselves as “Agents” with the I.R.S. advising they failed to make payment on their taxes. They often have the victims Personal Identifying Information such as name, date of birth, address and household members. All of which are available on many websites that contain “public records”. With this information they convince the victims through intimidation tactics (fines, arrest) to resolve the delinquencies over the phone using the same Pre-Paid method.

**SCAM** – There are also cases targeting the elderly in which callers obtain the name of a grandchild and call saying he or she is in jail and needs to be bailed out. They provide the relatives name and personal information and demand payment via Pre-Paid Visa or MasterCard.



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**SCAM** – The callers identify themselves as Microsoft Employee's and advise you they are aware of the "Error/Virus" message on your computer. They ask you to log onto your computer and instruct you to press certain keys giving them access and control over your computer at which time they have all your personal identifying information. In short, they hold your computer "hostage" and demand payment to repair and restore it.

**SCAM** – The suspect copies/pastes existing rental/vacation properties and then re-posts them on "Craig's List, Zillow or Westside Rentals" with a different contact and phone number from the legitimate rental. The properties are listed below the current market to attract renters. When the victim calls they are instructed to go look at the property and are given a "lock-box" combination or advised where "hidden keys" are located to gain entrance. Upon agreeing on the rental price the victim is instructed to make a "cash security deposit" into a bank account. The suspect advises the victim they will then meet at the property to sign the rental agreement and provide them keys. However, they never show up and the bank accounts are quickly closed.

**SOLUTION:** Don't give personal details like credit card numbers, bank account information or social security numbers over the phone. If you are suspicious, ask the caller for their information, get a call-back number and call the respective agency to verify. Then, report the incident to the police. Utility Companies and Government Agencies NEVER ask for payment to be made using a Pre-Paid Visa, MasterCard or Green Dot Card. Finally, if the callers are using intimidation tactics and pressuring you to make the payment now...don't do it!