



New Castle County Sheriff warns public of scam involving callers impersonating Sheriff's Office staff

For Immediate Release

Recently, my office has been receiving a number of calls from citizens inquiring about phone calls they have received from persons representing themselves as law enforcement from the Sheriff's office. Often time these individuals are representing themselves as Sergeants or Lieutenants from the Sheriff's Office. They are then demanding money – often in the form of gift cards - to avoid arrest.

Please note, the New Castle County Sheriff's office is not a law enforcement agency; we do not have military ranks such as sergeants or lieutenants, only **deputies**. More importantly our deputies do not make arrest and will never ask you to meet outside of our office for any kind of payment, or require you to make payments using gift cards.

These are scams. Usually someone will contact you and assert that you owe a fine or fee to some official governmental agency like the IRS or the courts. If they say the IRS they may tell you that you owe back taxes. If it's the courts, they may say you owe a fine for failing to serve on jury duty. They will then demand some type of payment to avoid arrest. This is a scare tactic. Please be aware of the following:

- The IRS never initiates contact with you via phone call, email or social media.
- The IRS cannot threaten to have you arrested or deported for not paying.
- You will never be asked to pay using a gift card or pre-paid debit card.
- The Sheriff's Office does not call the citizens of New Castle County demanding payments of fines for missing a court appearance.
- The Sheriff's Office does not make threats of immediate arrest if you do not comply with the instructions of the caller.

If someone tells you they are representing the **Sheriff's Office**, **you may contact my office directly at 302-395-8450 to verify the origin of the call**. If the caller indicates they are representing some other agency, contact that agency directly. For the **New Castle County Police Department call 302 573 2800, City of Wilmington 302 654 5151** or the **Delaware State Police at 302 739 5960**.

Also remember, **do not give personal financial information over the phone or internet unless you initiated the contact and you are absolutely certain of the person or entity you have contacted**.

Hang up on nuisance callers and be aware of emails and social media messages offering free products, advising you of sweep stakes winnings and free vacations. If it seems too good to be true, it probably is.

If you suspect you've been the victim of a scam or you believe someone is trying to fraudulently get money from you, don't be afraid to talk to someone you trust. You are not alone. There are people who can help. Doing nothing could only make it worse. Consult with the New Castle County Police Department.

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