



New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs

★ ★ **Oct. 11, 2016 FRAUD ALERT** ★ ★

ALERT – Beware of Fraudulent Immigration Enforcement Calls – According to a September 30th article in the Bergen Record, a scam cost a Clifton woman \$1,000 after a caller convinced her that the money was needed to keep her husband from being deported. The victim had received a call at her home from a person who represented themselves as a U.S. customs and border patrol representative who informed her that her husband had been detained by immigration authorities and that she needed to make a payment to release him so he could “avoid torture and deportation.” The caller arranged a car for the victim, which transported her to a store in Garfield, where the victim was instructed to purchase 14 iTunes gift cards worth \$50 each and 12 iTunes gift cards worth \$25 each, totaling \$1,000. According to police, the woman was then instructed to scratch off the pin numbers and give the activated numbers to the caller. **BE SUSPICIOUS OF SUCH CALLS AND WHEN ANYONE ASKS YOU TO MAKE A PAYMENT WITH ALTERNATIVE MEANS LIKE PRE-PAID DEBIT CARDS OR GIFT CARDS.**

ALERT – Scammers Posing as JCP&L Utility Employees in Monmouth County – According to an October 5th article on NJ.com, scammers claiming to be employees of Jersey Central Power & Light (“JCP&L”) are reportedly calling consumers in Monmouth County, telling them that they owe money on their electric bill and if they don’t pay, the power will be shut off. The scammer then tells the consumer that they need to get a pre-paid debit card, such as a Green Dot MoneyPak card, and use it to settle the account. This article goes on to state that officials with JCP&L indicated that they do not threaten to immediately shut off a customer’s power in order to settle debts and that they do not demand payments over the phone using a pre-paid debit card. Last month, we issued a fraud alert concerning scammers posing as Public Service Electric & Gas (“PSE&G”) employees.

ALERT – Don’t Fall for “Virtual Kidnapping” Scam – On October 5th, the Washington Post published an article about a “virtual kidnapping” scam in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. The victim received a phone call and was told that her daughter was kidnapped and that she had to pay a ransom for her daughter to be released. On the call, the fraudsters had someone screaming for help, who the victim believed was her daughter. The fraudsters then instructed the victim to go to various offices and stores to wire money to certain names and addresses in Mexico. Law enforcement officials believed that scammers may have obtained information about the victim such as her zip code, which indicated that she lived in a wealthy suburb, which made her more of a target for this type of scam. Beware of variations of this scam, also known as the “grandparent scam,” where scammers try to get a ransom by tricking you into believing that a loved one is in danger.



Contact us if you suspect **FRAUD**

N.J. Division of Consumer Affairs
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