

WESTMINSTER POLICE DEPARTMENT

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MEDIA RELEASE

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

08/14/2019

Originally released on
3/08/2019

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GIFT/GOOGLE PLAY CARDS SCAM ALERT

The Westminster Police Department has experienced a recent increase in the number of reported gift card scams / fraud. In these types of scams the targeted victim receives a telephone call or an email from an individual demanding immediate payment for a delinquent account balance and instructs the victim to provide payment using a form of electronic technology. These can be in the form of corporate gift cards, iTunes cards, Green Dot cards or Google Play cards as just a few examples. These situations have included demands to satisfy outstanding tax bills, bail money for friends or family, debt collection, or lottery winnings, just to name a few.

The caller will instruct the victim to respond to a retailer and purchase a designated amount of gift cards. The caller will give the victim instructions to provide information that will allow the caller to use the cards to make purchases.

Once again the WPD is cautioning residents to not make any purchases or provide any information upon receiving this type of call. Residents should attempt to obtain a call back phone number and name from the individual making any such request.

Contact your local law enforcement agency immediately and report the incident. If you receive an email requesting you to purchase gift cards or Google play cards for any reason, do not respond to the request and contact your local law enforcement agency.

If you are a victim of this type of scam and have reported it to your local law enforcement agency, you can also report the scam or any other type of financial fraud to the Federal Trade Commission via email [<http://www.ftc.gov/complaint>]. You can also report the scam to the following companies if you purchased their gift cards:

Amazon:

* 1-888-280-4331

Google Play:

* 1-855-466-4438

* iTunes:

* 1-800-275-2273 – then press 6 – ask for the operator

If you want to learn more about this scam or other types of financial scams, you can contact LT Jeffrey Schuster Westminster Police Department 410-848-4646.

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TIPS LINE—(410) 857-8477