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MASSACHUSETTS

POLICE DEPARTMENT



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **BEVERLY POLICE SEE UPTICK IN REPORTED SCAMS**

9/6/23: The Beverly Police Criminal Investigations Division is seeing a recent uptick in several different types of scams which have netted millions of dollars in money losses for these scams which typically target elderly victims. The most common scams the department has been investigating recently are;

- **Phone/Online Scams** - In these types of scams, a caller “spoofs” (duplicates a number that is generally familiar to the victim), duplicates a police department or federal law enforcement agencies number, or claims to be the Internal Revenue Service looking for payment from back tax issues. These scammers will also “spoof” email addresses of companies such as Comcast, or National Grid in which they are looking for payment of past bills. In most if not all of these instances scammers are looking for the victim to send payment using a gift card, prepaid card, wire transfer, or Bitcoin and or Cryptocurrency transfer. Citizens should avoid clicking links, opening attachments, or scanning QR codes from unsolicited emails or text messages. In regards to phone scams, citizens should hang up on the caller and dial the number back as spoofed numbers typically will not receive incoming phone-calls.
- **Home Improvement Scams** – In this type of scam, the scammer typically solicits door to door claiming to be a contractor who is in the neighborhood and noticed the victim’s property needs work. In most instances, this involves chimney, roof, retaining wall/ masonry work, or driveway paving. Victims have reported that the “contractor” offered to drive them to the bank so that funds could be secured to start the work. Citizens should be aware that solicitors are required to register with the police department and be permitted through the city. Citizens should contact Beverly Police if they want to check on a solicitor.



- Family Member in Jail – These types of scams involve a scammer contacting a victim and stating that a loved one is currently in jail for a serious offense. The scammer states that the loved one is looking at serious jail time for the “offense” but that they can settle this by sending payment in gift cards, or western union wire transfers. In some instance the scammer mentions the use of a bail bondsmen, or threatens the victim to sign a non-disclosure agreement. MASSACHUSETTS DOES NOT UTILIZE BAIL BONDSMEN. In this instance, hang up and contact the real department phone number.
- Romance Scam - Scammer will befriend the victim generally online through chat or a dating site. After a series of interactions, (never actually meeting face to face) the scammer will tell the victim about an illness whether their own or a family member in which they ask the victim to assist with medical costs. Scammers will also state that they want to meet the victim in person and travel with them asking the victim to pay for the costs of the travel. Citizens should be vigilant when chatting or arranging to meet unknown parties from chat rooms or less reputable online dating sites.
- Shopping Plaza Panhandling – For the past few years, residents may have noticed someone playing violin music in front of businesses, generally this takes place in a well-traveled plaza or an area with a grocery store. The violinist can usually be seen playing an electric violin through a speaker system generally with a backing track soliciting for money stating that they have fallen on hard times and are trying to support their families. This form of panhandling has been prevalent in the North Shore area, and in many instances the “musician” is simply playing a pre-recorded track through the speaker system and not actually playing the instrument. Citizens should again be vigilant when handing money to these panhandlers.

If you feel that you may have been the victim of any one of these types of scams, contact your local police department or go to [www.mass.gov/info-details/avoiding-scams-and-frauds](http://www.mass.gov/info-details/avoiding-scams-and-frauds)

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