

From Lieutenant Thomas Duncan

The Stafford Resident Troopers Office is warning residents to be cautious after a rise in telephone scams in recent months.

These scammers do not appear to be targeting a particular geographical area of the county or particular group; they are simply dialing a number and hoping that someone will answer the phone and believe their story. Some scammers may have a little information about your family, such as a grandson/daughter name, husband or wife's name. That information is gained through many different resources on the intranet and social media.

Many of these telephone calls the scammer tells the victim that a family member or friend is in trouble or needs help. Scammers present a variety of emergency situations in these calls, including a loved one going to jail, getting into an accident, getting kidnapped or being physically hurt, the IRS wants money for back taxes, or Microsoft saying you have a virus on your computer. Everyday criminals are thinking of new ways to scam you.

The suspect often states that the event has occurred in another area and that the loved one is unable to talk. To assist in helping the family member or friend, the suspect says that the victim must send money via wire transfer or other fund transfer. On some occasions, a person might get on the telephone and represent themselves as a family member.

The telephone scammers often use a technique called "spoofing" to manipulate and provide a fictitious number to a Caller ID display.

**Review the following tips before you receive the telephone call;**

Do not provide information over the phone. Scammers often ask leading questions to retrieve information from you. Often, you do not realize that you are giving them valuable information.

**Scammers create a sense of urgency. Slow down and ask the caller for detailed information and a contact number. Tell the caller you will call them back. Then, attempt to verify the caller's story by calling family and/or friends.**

Remember that scammers often use a technique called "spoofing." Spoofing provides a fictitious number to a Caller ID display.

If a family member is put on the telephone, ask difficult personal questions; such as a nick name, what Elementary school do you attend, what was the name of your first girl/boy friend etc.

No State, Town or Federal agency accepts any type of cards as payment or require immediate payment through a wire transfer.

The IRS will not contact anyone by telephone.

If you have a question about legitimacy, contact the Stafford Resident Troopers office at 860 684-3777