



Hunterdon County Sheriff's Office

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Sheriff Fred Brown Warns Residents Of New Sophisticated Scams

Sheriff Frederick W. Brown is warning residents about new sophisticated scams recently brought to his attention, with callers attempting to take advantage of the public with false legal motives and scare tactics.

Sheriff Brown said, "Two complaints recently came through to my office, the first one was a warning to a resident missing a Federal Grand Jury Notice, but the caller used terms to incite fear and intimidation, such as arrest, warrant, NCIC database, gag order and summons. They were clearly trained on what words and language to use in order to convince the potential victim that they were in violation and legal action could ultimately be taken against them.

The second call was a utility bill collection attempt for thousands of dollars with the caller claiming it was due to an electronic payment glitch, advising the resident to purchase money pack cards in order to make the payment. This was an especially troubling call because the resident was then told someone would be coming to their home to pick up the cards."

According to the NJ Division of Consumer Affairs residents should be suspicious of any email, USPS mail or calls from anyone attempting to collect a debt from a utility, offering the COVID-19 vaccine or test for a fee, stimulus/government assistance or threats of arrest, summons or warrants for missing a jury notification.

"Anyone receiving a call from a utility or purporting to collecting funds for any overdue bill, especially when they are trying to collect funds that are placed onto money cards and need to be picked up from the resident's home, should hang up immediately and contact their local police department. Being aware is your best defense against these heinous criminals," Sheriff Brown said.

To report scam activity, contact Sheriff Brown at 908-788-1166, your local police department, or you can report it to the NJ Division of Consumer Affairs, <https://www.njconsumeraffairs.gov/> or by calling 800-242-5846.

For COVID-19 related scam activity, a Federal-State COVID-19 Fraud Task Force has been created and may be contacted by calling the hotline, 866-720-5721.