



# Hunterdon County Sheriff's Office

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**September 29, 2022**

## **Hunterdon County Sheriff Fred W. Brown Warns Residents Of New Scam Tactics, Stresses Dangers Lurking On Social Media And In Personal Email Accounts**

At the September 20<sup>th</sup> Hunterdon County Board of County Commissioners meeting, Sheriff Fred W. Brown warned the public about new and increasingly sophisticated scam campaigns that are targeting all members of the public.

This update to the Commissioner Board follows Sheriff Brown's recent information session to nearly 90 seniors in Milford at St. Edward's Church Parish Center about new scam tactics involving social media ads, personal email accounts, hotel and vacation rental fraud and several other fraud schemes that have become increasingly sophisticated and harder to identify.

Sheriff Brown advised Milford residents not to share personal information with anyone over the phone, including the block and lot of your personal home, your bank account information or social security number.

"Scammers will threaten those they call and attempt to intimidate people with claims of shutting-off power or gas to a home or business, or they will ask for bail money for a supposed loved one who is in jail. Scams also have been increasing across social media platforms and through emails to an individual's personal and work accounts," Sheriff Brown said.

Recent scams include:

- Direct Deposit payroll recipients should be aware that scammers are emailing to request updated banking information, impersonating an employer, and stating that without your response, you will not receive your pay;
- Utility company scams that involve a threat of imminent electricity or gas shut-off, due to a claim of non-payment, which the utility company would never do;
- A recent Facebook scam claims that a roof replacement and SOLAR program for JCP&L customers is available in Hunterdon County and asks interested people to apply directly through their social media account. It was verified by a JCP&L representative that this is a scam, and no one should apply;
- Mortgage and deed scams which allow thieves to take out new loans or make false representations with your personal homeowner's information;

- Scammers will call with threats of a home foreclosure due to back taxes owed; never agree to pay over the phone or to provide banking information in order to pay the alleged back taxes;
- Hotel guests should never agree to repeat credit card information over the phone, even if the call is from the front desk. Scammers will call the hotel and ask for a room. When the call is transferred, it looks like the call origin is from the front desk. Always insist on giving that information to a hotel employee in person;
- Vacation rentals that ask for payment to be sent through the mail should be verified because scammers often rent properties they do not own;
- If you receive a call that you have won a lottery, and someone asks you to send 'good faith' money before receiving a check, hang up immediately, this is a scam;
- Any contractor who shows up at your home with supposed leftover materials from another job should be turned away. You typically get what you pay for!

Sheriff Brown noted, "I continue to advise Hunterdon County residents about scams so that residents have knowledge to prevent them from becoming the next victim of a consumer scam or identity fraud. By sharing information about these ongoing scam campaigns, I hope people will be armed with the necessary information to help keep their private information, home and finances secure."

Recently, AARP published an informational article on how to help seniors protect themselves from scams: <https://www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/info-08-2013/protect-your-parents-from-scams.html>

Always report any scam attempts to your local police department in the municipality where you live.

Residents can also call the Hunterdon County Sheriff's Office, 908-788-1166, with any questions or to report suspicious activity.