

Stay Away From Scams

By Ryan Thompson, Pine Knoll Shores Police Chief

Scams seem to be never ending. I get daily phone calls and emails from residents after a scammer has attempted to gain their personal information. Some of you may get tired of reading these articles, but if the scams were not working, the scammers would move on. The fact that they are continuing on a daily basis means that, unfortunately, people are still falling victim to them. Over the next few months, I will be writing these articles on scam awareness and protection over a wide range of areas.

Running a scam or fraud is a time-tested method for identity thieves. They may contact you in person, by phone, mail, email, or by trying to trick you into giving out personal information on a website. Avoid scam artist ploys by following these steps:

1) Stay aware of current scams by watching or reading the news. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) offers information and tips on current scams at consumer.ftc.gov (click on "Scam Alerts"). For internet scam updates, go to the Internet Crime Complaint Center site at ic3.gov and click on the "Alerts" link.

2) Before divulging personal information to anyone, know with whom you are dealing. Independently verify any information provided to you, and find the physical address and phone number of who contacted you by yourself. Don't trust email addresses given by unknown people, and search online for a company's name and website. Read through the site, and read any online reviews of the person or business.

3) Never reply to messages asking for personal information, whether the message is sent over the phone or by email, text message or through an ad. Do not call phone numbers or click links contained in these messages. You could be a target of phishing, which is when cyber thieves send you emails that try to lure you into providing or confirming personal information. The emails look like they are from legitimate organizations, often ones you know. They ordinarily use threats, warnings or enticements to create a sense of urgency—and you are usually asked to click on a link. If you do, it can lead to a spoof or fake website, which can look real enough to trick you into entering personal information.

4) Never send money or account information in reply to notices that you won a prize, lottery or a Publishers Clearing House sweepstakes.

5) Give only to established charities and avoid pop-up charities that suddenly appear after disasters. Check a charity's trustworthiness at give.org, the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance site.

6) Don't fall for pressure tactics. Never react quickly or impulsively to offers or requests.

7) Be wary of imposter scams in which a scammer pretends to be someone close to you or an entity you are unlikely to question. Scammers pretend to be family members, friends, or representatives of government agencies or companies, often trying to get personal information or gift cards.

To report a scam or fraud, contact your local police department and report it to the state Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division by calling 877-566-7226 or by filing a complaint online at ncdoj.gov.

Source: consumer.ftc.gov, ncdoj.gov

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PUBLIC SAFETY

POLICE

During May, there were 3 arrests; 38 911 hang-ups; 11 alarm activations; 13 animal calls; 2 disturbance calls; 47 assist Fire/EMS calls; 5 motor vehicle collisions; 222 traffic stops; 73 citations issued (22 speeding, 4 stop sign/stop light, 3 registration/inspection, 5 license revoked/expired, 22 other traffic violations, 15 narcotics violations, 1 alcohol violation and 1 other criminal offense); 30 beach patrols; 348 business checks; 507 foot patrols; and 215 residence checks. Police personnel participated in 308.5 training hours. Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) worked 77.5 hours.

FIRE AND EMS

In May, responders handled 1 fire, 53 rescue and emergency medical service calls, 2 hazardous condition (no fire) calls, 2 service calls, 2 good intent calls, and 2 false alarms or false calls. Personnel participated in 404 training hours.

REMINDER: Lock your doors, especially your vehicles, and don't leave valuables in sight. Report suspicious people or vehicles to dispatch (726-1911) so that the police can be notified. You are not "bothering" the police if you call to report something that doesn't look right. They prefer to assess the situation rather than find out after the fact that you had noticed something and didn't report it. Alert citizens are an asset to the community.

The Shoreline

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ARTICLE DEADLINE

DUE DATE	ISSUE
Mon., July 16	Aug.
Wed., Aug. 15	Sept.
Wed., Sept. 12	Oct.
Wed., Oct. 17	Nov.
Mon., Nov. 11	Dec.
Tues. Dec. 11	Jan. 2019

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

The 19th of the month prior to desired issue

Articles always welcome.