



NEWS RELEASE

DIVISION OF POLICE • COLUMBUS, OHIO

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Current Scams Targeting Columbus Residents

Economic Crime Unit Investigating

The Columbus Division of Police Economic Crime Unit wants the public to be aware of a few economic crime trends that have come to officers' attention in recent weeks.

1. Employees receive a text from who they think is their boss. The text instructs them to purchase hundreds of dollars of gift cards from retailers like eBay, Target, or Apple and then send a picture of the number on the back. The employees complete the task and later find out they were not conversing with their boss. Some employees spent their own money; some employees were instructed to remove funds from business cash registers.
2. People are responding to job postings on websites like Indeed.com, however, the ads are fraudulent. Some victims of the fraudulent ads are instructed to download an app to their phones so they can be interviewed; interviews in some cases have been extensive. Victims are then hired for positions that will allow them to work from home. The victims are sent checks, usually \$5,000, to be spent on computer equipment needed for the job. Once the check arrives, victims are instructed to deposit the check in their personal bank accounts and told to get cash out but to keep a few hundred dollars as a signing bonus. With cash in hand, con artists tell the victims they have a preferred retailer from which to purchase the equipment, and that the preferred retailer requires payment in bitcoin. The victims are instructed to deposit the cash in a "wallet" in an area bitcoin ATM. Days later the bank cancels the deposit because the checks are fraudulent. On top of losing \$5,000, most victims also provided the con artists with all their personal and banking information.

"When it doubt, do not give anything out," Economic Crime Unit Sergeant Chris Bond.
If you believe you have fallen victim to a scam please report it to police as soon as possible.

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