

## LOCAL SCAMS THAT COULD AFFECT YOU

It seems that there are new scams in the news on a daily basis. We may think that these scams are in other areas and won't affect us. This is not always the case. There are many scams right here in northeast Iowa that could affect you or a family member.

Below are some examples of scams that have occurred in our area:

### **Lottery Winner Scam –**

In this scam, the victim is contacted by mail or phone that they have "won" the lottery or a sweepstakes. Often the lottery is in a foreign country such as Canada. The alleged sweepstakes could be "The Publisher's Clearing House" or something similar. The victim is instructed that they will need to pay the taxes on the lottery/sweepstakes winnings before the proceeds can be distributed. The scam artist volunteers to send a "cashier's check" for the amount of the taxes due as they realize the victim cannot afford to pay the taxes before receiving the lottery/sweepstakes winnings. The victim will then receive the cashier's check in the mail. The victim is instructed to take the cashier's check to their local bank and deposit it into their account. The victim is then instructed to wire the amount due for "taxes" via Western Union. The scam artist promises that after the wire is received, the lottery winnings will be sent to the victim.

Of course, there are no actual lottery winnings. After the wire has been sent by the victim, they will later discover that the "cashier's check" was counterfeit. The victim is then out the money that was sent via Western Union.

If you receive any type of correspondence or a phone call regarding wiring of money via Western Union, do NOT initiate the wire transfer. Contact the bank immediately and we will assist you.

### **Scam Artist claiming a grandchild has been injured –**

In this scam, the victim is contacted by phone and informed that their grandchild has been injured in an accident. The victim is informed that their grandchild is too injured to speak clearly and needs money wired immediately for medical costs. The victim is instructed to wire money via Western Union and all proceeds

will be directed to their grandchild's medical expenses. If you receive a call like this, always verify that such an accident has actually taken place. Always verify with the grandchild directly or other family member. It is easy for scam artists to get family members names from the Internet or Facebook. Never wire money until you have verified that the situation is real.

### **Credit Card Scam --**

In this scam, the victim is contacted by phone and is informed that the scam artist has made a payment on the victim's credit card. The victim must then "pay back" the scam artist for the payment that was made on the credit card by the scam. It seems impossible that the scam artist could get the victim's credit card number, but this can happen. If you receive a call like this, hang up the phone.

Immediately, call the phone number of the back of your credit card and speak with the fraud department. Ask them if a payment has been made on your credit card. Ask the credit card company to close your account number and issue you a new credit card with a different account number. It can happen that a scam artist could make a payment on your existing credit card and then manufacture a duplicate plastic card and use the card to make purchases.

### **Scam Artist claiming to be an investigator:**

Many times, a scam artist will call you claiming to be an investigator of a fraud instance. They will then ask for personal information to "prove" that they are talking to the owner of the credit card. They could ask for the three digits on the back of the credit card or the expiration date on your credit card. Many times, a scam artist has the credit card account number, but not the expiration date or the three digit code that goes with the card. If you receive a call like this, do not give information from your credit card. A legitimate investigator will not ask these questions. Hang up on this caller and immediately call the phone

### **Internet Buying Scam –**

In this scam, the victim has an item for sale. The scam artist will contact the seller and offer to pay "more than the asking price". The scam artist will state that the extra proceeds are for shipping or handling. The scam artist will then ask that the victim to wire back the extra proceeds via Western Union. In this scenario, the scam artist has no intention of purchasing the item that is for sale. They simply want the seller to send funds via Western Union.

If you are contacted regarding the sale of an item that you have advertised over the Internet, do not wire any proceeds to anyone regarding this transaction. Any time a seller offers you more than the asking price, there is a problem. Always remember that a wire transfer is done immediately and cannot be reversed. That is why is the scam artists prefer to use this method of payment.

### **Job Employment Scam –**

In this scam, the victim has posted a legitimate resume on the Internet. The scam artist will then contact the victim and offer the individual a “job”. The job will be clearing funds or processing payments. As payment for the job, the individual will keep some of the proceeds. The victim will receive “cashier’s checks” and will be instructed to wire via Western Union a specific amount. The amount of the wire will always be less than the amount of checks received, and this difference is payment for the job performed.

After the wire has been sent, the cashier’s checks will be returned to the victim as counterfeit.

### **Account Numbers –**

In this scam, the scam artist will call your home phone or even your cell phone and ask you for various account numbers. The numbers they could ask you for are your debit card number, your checking account number, your social security number or your credit card number. If any person calls asking for personal information or account numbers, hang up the phone immediately. A legitimate business including your bank would never call and ask for these numbers.

### **Telephone Scam from an automated caller --**

This is a scam in which you receive a phone call from an automated caller from the phone number zero, zero or unknown caller. The automated voice may say “Your Internet Banking has been Compromised” and further instructs you to select prompts on the phone or enter your Mastercard number into the phone. If you receive this call, hang up the phone, DO NOT enter any numbers into the phone. This is a scam. The scam artists are just trying to get information.

## **Telephone Scam claiming to be from the bank or law enforcement --**

In this scam, the telemarketer says they are calling from the bank or a law enforcement agency. They then ask for personal information such as checking account numbers and social security number. Hang up the phone if you receive one of these calls. Never give information over the phone to someone who has called you. The bank or law enforcement would never ask these questions.

## **Summary --**

There are many possible scams. Most of the scams have the same general purpose, which is to get your money. If anything sounds too good to be true, it generally is! Please protect yourself and do not follow any instructions given by someone over the phone or by mail. If you ever question whether a request is a scam, please contact us at the bank. We are always happy to assist you.