



WOODBURN POLICE DEPARTMENT NEWS RELEASE

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“Relative Crashed” Phone Scam

CITY OF WOODBURN – The Woodburn Police Department would like to make the Woodburn Community and surrounding area aware of a phone scam that is currently trending. This particular scam seems to be targeting the Hispanic Population.

A caller, usually male, calls the victim and pretends to be a nephew or cousin that is en route to visit. The greeting the caller uses is a generic, “Uncle (or Aunt – if a female answers), it’s me.” And pauses, hoping the victim will insert a name. The caller pretends to be the name given. The caller gives a location or time of arrival of about 4 hours away. The caller hangs up after finding out the victim is excited about the surprise visit.

The caller will call back about 10-15 minutes later claiming they were involved in a slight fender bender. The caller sounds upset and stressed and asks that the victim let them borrow some money, usually two to four thousand dollars. The caller will usually claim that they have an un-cashed work check and will reimburse the victim in a few hours when they arrive.

The caller attempts to play on the victim’s emotions or sentimental bond by claiming that their license is expired, or they forgot to pay their insurance and aren’t covered or even that they’re afraid of getting arrested. The caller claims that the other party they were involved in the crash with, is threatening to call the Police unless they send the money right away to pay for damages caused in the crash.

The caller’s phone number will come across as blocked or unavailable and when asked, will not provide a phone number, claiming that the phone battery is almost dead. The caller will plead that the victim get the money ready and they will call back. The caller will stress that it is only a short term loan and will reimburse the victim within hours as they are almost there.

Sometimes the caller will put the other party on the phone and that party will claim they are some important political figure from another country and don’t want to get the Police involved or they will insinuate that if the victim doesn’t help the caller, it could cause problems for their families in their home country. The caller(s) will get very insistent and intimidating.

If the victim agrees to let the caller “borrow” the money, the caller will attempt to get the victim to wire the money. Observed most recently in this scam, the caller will try to get the victim to wire the money to a relative of the second party in Mexico or another country, claiming that it will cause less problems with taxes or that they’re not near a location that the money could be wired to. There have even been persons involved in this scam that pretend to be an “Officer” from another state and are just trying to assist the caller so that they do not get arrested.

The Woodburn Police Department would like to stress that phone scams like these, though not common, can be frightening and appear real. The Woodburn Police recommends that you not give out any information to include names of relatives. Call the relative that the caller is claiming to be and verify it is

not them. Ask questions to verify the identity of the caller; such as asking about a child or pet, but change the name to see if the caller verifies the information.

Call your local Police Department to report this scam and any other scams you hear about. If you have any questions or have fallen victim to a similar scam, please report it to your local Police Department. In Woodburn, use the 24 hour number: 503-982-2345.

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