

FRAUD AWARENESS

Gift Card Scams

Gift cards have been made widely accessible and easily purchased at your local grocery store, pharmacy or gas station. Due to the ease of access, scammers are using this accessibility to obtain funds and attempt to commit fraud. As a reminder – gift cards are for gifts and should not be used as payment. The known scams below are consistent with gift card payment requests.

Lottery scam red flags:

- Scammers will contact you, saying you've won the lottery or a sweepstakes, in order to receive your winnings you are required to pay a percentage of the total winning amount
- Bad actors may request your financial information to claim prize
- Urgency in payment requested for fear of losing the prize/winnings
- Overpayment or a fake check received with a request by the scammer to return a portion of funds
- Request payment in form of gift cards, prepaid debit cards or cryptocurrency
- Demand confidentiality and secrecy

Social Security scam red flags:

- Scammer pretends to be a known government agency:
 - Social Security Administration
 - Local police department
 - FBI
- Bad actor threatens individual with legal action unless they provide immediate payment
- Request payment in form of gift cards, prepaid debit cards or cryptocurrency
- Demand confidentiality and secrecy

Tips for staying safe:

- Never provide your personal information to someone you don't know
 - Social security number
 - Address
 - Birthdate
- Do not allow someone you don't know to access your computer
- If you receive a call from a government agency mentioned above requesting payment, contact your financial advisor, these trusted professionals can help identify if you have been contacted by a scammer
- If you believe you receive a call with any of the red flags listed, cease any and all communication with the individual immediately

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