



CITY OF REDDING

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Telephone Scam

Over the past few months, Redding area residents have been receiving phone calls from scammers claiming to be a relative in trouble and asking the victim to send money to help. There are several variants to the scam. The most common involves the victim receiving a phone call, often late at night, from someone who starts the conversation with something similar to, "Hi grandma. Guess who this is." In some of the cases the caller will use the victim's name. When the victim responds with the name of one of their grandchildren, the caller will pretend to be that person and ask for money. In several cases the caller has said that they have been arrested and they need money for bail. Other reasons have included money needed for airfare, bus fare, car repair and food. The caller is always out of the area and needs the money right away.

If the victim falls for the scam, they are asked to send the money via Western Union or MoneyGram. Often, especially if the caller is saying they need to post bail, they will say they have a friend who will pick up the money. Sometimes they will put someone else on the line who pretends to be a law enforcement officer or jailer. In the majority of cases the money is sent out of the country.

The Redding Police Department has the following suggestions to help people not become a victim of this type of scam:

- If you receive a call from someone who says, "Guess who this is." say, "I don't know. Who is it?"
- If the caller does know your name and the name of the person they say they are, confirm their identification by asking personal questions like their birth date, their mother's name and birth date, their mother or fathers phone number and what street did they grow up on.
- If they say they are in a jail or police station ask which one and what the phone number is so you can call back. Then, using directory assistance or the internet, confirm the phone number and call back.
- Call their parents or other relatives and confirm the caller's whereabouts.

We always recommend using **extreme caution** when sending money via Western Union or MoneyGram. The scammer does not have to pick up the money at a particular location and once it has been picked up, you cannot get it back.

For more information contact the Redding Police Department's Crime Prevention Unit @ 225-4209.