



NEWS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE
OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

For Release: March 13, 2015

Contact: Sherry Llewellyn, (410) 313-2236
stllewellyn@howardcountymd.gov

Police issue warning about recent telephone scam *Offer tips to avoid falling victim to this or similar scams*

The Howard County Police Department is investigating recent reports of a telephone scam targeting residents.

In the last two weeks, the department has received at least four reports of incidents in which scammers attempt to elicit money from a victim by claiming to have taken a family member hostage. The caller states that the family member caused a car accident and is being held until the intended victim wires money to cover the damages. The caller attempts to keep the victim on the phone until the wire is complete.

In each of these cases, police have confirmed that the threat is a hoax.

While no one in these four cases wired money to the caller, the department is encouraging residents to take precautions to avoid falling victim to this or similar scams. Police are asking those who have family members, friends or neighbors that may be vulnerable to scams to share this message.

Along with the Howard County Office of Consumer Affairs, HCPD encourages residents to consider the following tips:

- Be wary of unsolicited phone calls.
- Don't allow a caller to threaten or scare you into taking immediate action.
- Refrain from sharing personal or financial information over the phone.
- Never send money (via wire or pre-paid debit card) to someone you don't know.

Police believe additional incidents may have gone unreported. If you believe you may have been the victim of a scam, please call police at (410) 313-2200.

To get more information on current scams, visit www.howardcountymd.gov/consumer.

###