



PITT COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

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Pre-Paid Debit Card/Gift Card Phone Scams

Someone might ask you to pay for something by putting money on a gift card, like a Google Play or iTunes card, and then give them the numbers on the back of the card. If they ask you to do this, they're trying to scam you. No real business or government agency will ever insist you pay them with a gift card. Anyone who demands to be paid with a gift card is a scammer.

One common scam is to obtain names of local law enforcement officers from websites or news reports then place calls claiming to be that officer. The "officer" will say that you missed a court date or didn't show up for jury duty or something similar and you are about to be arrested. They will pressure you to *immediately* pay a "security bond" while you are asked to stay on the phone or officers will come to your home and "arrest you". If you're hang up, they will "arrest you". They pressure you, harass you, stress you, and sound very convincing while you have little time to think. They will want you to go to the nearest Walmart, drug store, or similar place and buy several prepaid debit/gift cards, scratch the strip off the back and read the numbers to them while they remain on the phone. Oftentimes they will give you the Sheriff's Office address and tell you that you must mail the completed cards in to the office the next day to complete the transaction (a useless task to make it sound real and buy more time). By the time you finish reading the caller the numbers off the back, all the money has been removed and the cards are already worthless.

If anyone calls saying they are law enforcement and demanding payment, hang up and call their office to ask for them. No one that is legit demands gift cards as payment. **Gift cards are for presents, not payments!** Please use the following rules to keep your hard earned money out of the hands of criminals. Please help educate your family and friends. We see so many people lose thousands of dollars each year in this manner, as they try to do the right thing, but are taken by vile criminals. Keep your hard earned money!

GIFT CARDS ARE FOR GIFTS - NOT FOR PAYING PEOPLE!

LEGIT LAW ENFORCEMENT WILL NEVER DEMAND MONEY FROM YOU IN LIEU OF ARREST!

WE DO NOT CALL PEOPLE TO NEGOTIATE TERMS OF ARREST!

Some criminals will now try related scams involving ATM transactions of Bitcoin or other cryptocurrency. Similar frauds are also being employed against registered sex offenders. Please be very cautious **ANYTIME ANYONE** contacts you demanding money claiming to be government officials and exerting pressure.



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COMMUNITY IMPACT UNIT

CRIME PREVENTION DETAIL

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