

# GIFT CARD SCAMS



**IRVINE POLICE DEPARTMENT**

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*In Partnership with the Community*



## How it Works

- A stranger calls to say you owe money or that your personal information has been compromised.
- The caller instructs you to purchase gift cards right away to remedy the situation.
- The caller says you must stay on the line while you make the purchase.
- The caller orders you to read the gift card numbers over the phone.
- The caller then drains the gift cards of funds by making online purchases.

## What You Should Know

- The call may appear as though it is coming from a legitimate number, such as the Social Security Administration. This is called “caller ID spoofing” and is part of the scam.
- Government agencies do not take payment for bail, fines, or taxes in gift cards.
- Government agencies will not call you to tell you that you are going to be arrested or threaten your Social Security benefits.

## How to Protect Yourself

- Never provide personal information such as your Social Security Number or bank account numbers to a stranger.
- Hang up the phone if you get an unsolicited call that instructs you to purchase gift cards.
- Do not call back the number you received the call from. Instead, use the Internet or other trusted source to obtain a phone number if you believe you may have legitimate business with the agency in question.
- For more information, visit the Federal Trade Commission website at *ftc.gov*.
- Remember, gift cards are for gifts, not for payments.

If you need reassurance or think you are a victim of fraud, call the Irvine Police Department at 949-724-7000.

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