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SHERIFF DARREN M. POPKIN

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For Immediate Release

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Sheriff Darren M. Popkin or
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SCAM Phone Calls AGAIN Demand Money to Prevent Arrest

Telephone scammers are again using the guise of a sheriff's deputy to extort people into immediately sending money to avoid arrest. According to Montgomery County, Maryland Sheriff Darren M. Popkin, a nationwide phone scam is again targeting Montgomery County, Maryland residents. In the last week, over 50 residents reported receiving a scam call requesting money or credit card information.

The caller, falsely claiming to be from the sheriff's office, says that a warrant issued for your arrest will be served unless, of course, you pay up. The caller may also be leaving voice mail messages with a call-back number that is answered by a realistic law enforcement sounding recorded announcement.

"Montgomery County Deputy Sheriffs will never call and threaten to arrest you unless you immediately send money or an electronic payment," said Sheriff Popkin, reissuing a fraud alert previously released in April, 2014 and May, 2015. "Deputies will never ask you to place funds for payment on a pre-paid credit card to cancel an arrest warrant." Do not provide any unsolicited caller demanding money any personal, credit card or bank information. If called, hang up immediately.

The scammer may get specific by giving you his name and "official" law enforcement rank. The caller might also request personal information so he can clear your name and cancel the fictitious arrest warrant.

The scammers may tell their victims to go to a store, get a pre-paid credit card, load it up with money, and then call a phone number with the card information.

People can protect themselves from becoming victims of identify theft by never giving out any personal information when getting an unsolicited phone call. Giving out sensitive information over the phone — both personal and financial — can put people at risk for fraud.

The Maryland Judiciary, in July, 2015, issued a warning advising that “Courts do not call or email people to obtain payment or personal information. Courts do not request credit card or Pay Pal payments by email or telephone.” The Montgomery County Circuit Court Jury Commissioner’s office does not call or email citizens to obtain payment relative to any jury service.

If you have received a scam phone call from someone claiming to be a Montgomery County (Md.) Deputy Sheriff who is going to arrest you unless you immediately send money, contact the Montgomery County Sheriff’s Office at 240-777-7000. Please save any recorded messages, record the date and time of the phone call, the purported name of the caller, the call back number, and their phone number as displayed on caller ID.

If you are the victim of a fraud, and have given the scammer credit card payment information, please notify your credit card company, as well as the Montgomery County Police Fraud Unit at 240-773-6330.

Darren M. Popkin is the 61st Sheriff of Montgomery County, Maryland.

The Montgomery County Sheriff is a State elected official under the Maryland Constitution, Article IV, Section 44. The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office, created in 1777, engages in general law enforcement, judicial enforcement, prisoner transport, domestic violence, fugitive apprehension and security related functions. Specialized units include K-9 explosive detection and high risk Special Response teams. Deputies participate in Federal, State and Local Task Forces including the Montgomery County Firearms Investigative Unit, Gang Apprehension Unit, and the Capital Area Region Fugitive Task Force (CARFTF). The Sheriff’s Office plays a leading role in the operation of the multi-agency Montgomery County Family Justice Center.

For further information contact Sheriff Darren M. Popkin or Chief Deputy Sheriff Mark E. Bonanno at 240-777-7000.

Note: You have received this Press Release because your contact information is on the Montgomery County Government press release list serve.