

Police have received reports of scams carried out over the telephone to deceive victims into parting with their money. Some common variations of these scams are generally known as the Lottery Scam, Kidnap Scam and Impersonation Scam.

Description of Scams

2. **Lottery Scam:** Tricksters would contact unsuspecting victims through phone calls, SMS or emails to inform them that they have won prize money in a foreign lottery. The tricksters would request for an advance payment in order to process the claims for prizes.

3. **Kidnap Scam:** Tricksters would claim that the recipient's loved one had been kidnapped and demand that a ransom be transferred to a specific bank account. These fake threats are usually accompanied by sounds of cries for help in the background.

4. **Impersonation Scam:** Tricksters would impersonate police officers or staff from the Courts, and accuse victims to be involved in criminal offences. The common allegations include failure to appear in court in relation to one's involvement in money laundering, unlicensed money lending cases and commercial offences. Subsequently, the culprit would ask the victims to make money transfers via remittance companies for "police investigations". In reality, the victims were not involved in any criminal cases. In another permutation, the victim would receive an email informing that he had to pay charges to the Courts.

5. To lend credibility to their scams, the number that appeared on the recipients' phone may reflect those belonging to local authorities such as:

- a. Supreme Court Quality Service Manager/ Enquiry Hotline: 63381034,
- b. CID Hotline: 64350000, or
- c. Police Emergency Hotline: 999.

This is commonly known as 'Caller ID Spoofing', where advances in technology enable callers to lie about their identities through false numbers.

Crime Prevention Measures

6. The Police would like to advise the public to note the following:

Lottery Scam

- i. Ignore notifications of a win in a lottery or lucky draw when you had not purchased any lottery ticket or participated in any lucky draw.
- ii. Do not make any advanced payment to claim any prize money. Winning a lucky draw or lottery **does not** require you to make any advance payment.
- iii. Do not entertain such SMSes and calls.
- iv. Be wary of get-rich-quick offers. If an offer sounds too good to be true, it is probably a scam.

Kidnap Scam

- i. If the public receive kidnap scam calls, they should remain calm and try to contact their next-of-kin immediately. If repeated attempts at contacting their loved-ones fail, they should then contact the police.
- ii. In addition, the public could pose questions to the 'kidnapper' to verify the identity of the purportedly kidnapped victim, for instance, the number of family members staying together or whether there are pets in the house, to help them establish if the call is indeed genuine.

Impersonation Scam

- i. Ignore any notification calls from unknown persons who claim to be government officials. All notices to attend court hearing would be notified by post or accompanied by an official letter.
 - ii. Police, Court officials and other government officials would **not** ask anyone who is in connection with a criminal case to make any transfer of funds to any bank accounts. If any payment is to be made, an official written notice and receipt would be issued.
 - iii. Do not give your personal details such as NRIC and bank account numbers to anyone over the telephone or e-mail.
7. Those who encounter such scams should report the matter to the Police at the nearest Neighbourhood Police Centre.