

FRAUD ALERT!

Police issue warning about phone scam

By Christian Menno Staff writer | Posted: Tuesday, July 1, 2014 5:57 pm The Intelligencer

A type of phone scam that authorities have been monitoring across the country has made its way to this area.

Montgomery Township and Richland police warn residents and businesses about an extortion scheme involving Green Dot MoneyPak and other types of prepaid cards.

While the cards themselves are legitimate products used to pay bills or make purchases, they can be used by criminals to steal money from unsuspecting victims, police said.

In one version of the scam, a person claiming to be a representative from the IRS or a utility company calls and demands payment for back taxes or an overdue bill. The criminal then instructs the victim to pay using a prepaid card and also to provide the serial number of the card. Once the serial number is obtained, the criminal is able to transfer some or all of the money that had been added to the card.

Representatives of power company UGI Utilities said it has received reports from customers that criminals have been calling them, claiming to be from UGI asking for payments from prepaid Visa cards.

The company said Tuesday that the calls are not legitimate, adding that “UGI would not recommend a prepaid credit card as an option for payment.” UGI advises all of its customers to provide no information and to contact the company at 1-800-276- 2722 if they receive such phone calls.

In another version of the scam, the criminal calls a victim to claim that a relative needs bail money or money for emergency medical treatment. And the only way to pay is for the victim to use a prepaid card and also provide the card’s serial number.

Police advise residents to be suspicious of anyone who calls and demands immediate payment for any reason.

Utility companies and government agencies will neither contact customers demanding immediate payment or ask for payments via a prepaid card, according to police.

Monthly Fraud Alerts brought to you by:

BUCKS COUNTY CRIMES AGAINST OLDER ADULTS TASK FORCE

Bucks County District Attorney's Office

215-348-6344

Bucks County Area Agency on Aging

215-348-0510

Bucks County Coroner's Office

215-348-3852

Network of Victim Assistance (NOVA)

1-800-675-6900

A Woman's Place (AWP)

1-800-220-8116

Bucks County Office of Consumer Protection

215-348-6060

Bucks County Register of Wills

215-348-6265

US Dept. of Health and Human Services/OIG

1-800-447-8477

www.crimesagainstolderadultsbucks.org

24 - HOUR HOTLINE: 1-800-490-8505