

Tehama County Sheriff's Office

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PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

SUMMARY OF INCIDENT: The Tehama County Sheriff's Office has had one case of a concerned family calling asking for a welfare check on another family member after receiving a telephone call leading them to believe their beloved family member has been taken hostage or was in imminent peril.

The caller, a male (nothing else can be described here) calls the person and says the aunt, grandma, daughter etc. will be hurt if the person being called does not listen carefully.

On the first occasion, when the family member became quiet the caller angrily said, "Now, you don't want to talk to me?" and hung up the phone.

There were no additional calls to this concerned family. The family member contacted TCSO to check on their daughter who they believed to be in imminent peril. The daughter was checked and found unharmed and unaware that such a call had been made to her family.

The second call was made by a male alleging a daughter was going to be harmed. The family member who received the call was immediately suspicious and doubted the veracity of the male caller's claim. The family member was able to contact her daughter via phone to learn she was not in imminent peril and had no idea her family had been contacted with such an allegation.

The phone number used during this second call would not accept any calls or texts back to it, nor did it have any voicemail.

TCSO Dispatch learned that Shasta County has had other reports like this as well as one call for service to The Red Bluff Police Department.

There have also been recent calls from alleged family members claiming they were in an accident and are now in jail and need money to get out of their situation or calls from the IRS claiming monies are owed with the people being called being pushed to provide credit card or banking information. Calls such as these are SCAMS.

The Tehama County Sheriff's Office would like to offer the following tips to help protect citizens from potential scams;

- If you receive a call making you legitimately fear for a family member, welfare checks can be conducted at any time day or night.

- Safeguard your personal information and credit card numbers by avoiding giving the information out over the phone. If you gave someone your credit card or checking account information over the phone, report it to the credit card company or bank and law enforcement.
- Beware of emails requesting your personal information. The IRS, PG&E and other companies take your security very seriously. They do not email or call anyone requesting that they provide personal information without first logging into your online account or by a call to them that you generate.
- Personally call any company's customer service line, if you're concerned about the legitimacy of a call about a past due bill, service request or request for personal information
- Ask to see identification before letting anyone who claims to be any company's representative inside your home. Most company employees carry their identification and most companies require their employees to show their ID to you if it's requested.
- Calls from a jail are generally collect calls and will identify the specific facility the call is coming from giving the person called an option to accept or decline the call.
- When in doubt don't give it out! Meaning, don't supply your credit card or banking information to anyone if you doubt anything they say is true.

Prepared by: Lt. Yvette Borden L85