



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Middlesex Sheriff's Office

Peter J. Koutoujian
Sheriff

400 Mystic Avenue
Medford, Massachusetts 02155

Phone (781) 960 2800
Fax (781) 960 2902

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For more information:
Kevin Maccioli
Public Information Officer (MSO)
781-960-2805

Police Chief James Cormier
Reading Police
781-944-1212

Middlesex Sheriff's Office and Reading Police warn of arrest scams

Middlesex Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian and Reading Police Chief James Cormier warned the public today about a continuing wave of scam calls in which perpetrators are posing as law enforcement and threatening victims with arrest for failure to pay fictional debts.

“Thursday afternoon, a Reading medical professional notified our office they had received a call from a man claiming to be a Middlesex Sheriff’s Deputy wishing to discuss an outstanding IRS debt,” said Sheriff Koutoujian. “Fortunately, the recipient of the call recognized this as a scam and did not provide the caller with any personal or financial information.”

In many of these cases callers attempt to get victims to purchase MoneyPak or GreenDot cards from pharmacies or grocery stores in order to pay the fictional debt. They indicate failure to do so will result in immediate arrest.

In Thursday’s incident, and in many others over the past year, the perpetrators of these scams have also managed to spoof the telephone number of the Middlesex Sheriff’s Office, making it appear as though they are actually speaking with a deputy by showing the Middlesex Sheriff’s Office telephone number on the victim’s caller ID.

“No legitimate law enforcement agency will ever threaten arrest over the phone,” said Sheriff Koutoujian. “Nor will they demand payment for debt over the phone.”

“Unfortunately, these scammers are very sophisticated and will use technology and emotions to their advantage,” said Chief Cormier. “If something doesn’t feel right, call your local police department and request their assistance and do not under any circumstances give out personal financial information over the telephone. No reputable company or government agency will elicit this type of information or payment over the phone.”

Anyone who receives a call similar in nature to those referenced above is encouraged to contact Reading Police at 781-944-1212. We also ask that you contact the Middlesex Sheriff's Office Investigations Unit at 978-932-3220 if the caller indicates they work for the Middlesex Sheriff's Office.

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