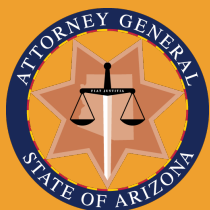


CONSUMER ALERT:

Gift Card Purchases



Arizona Attorney General
Mark Brnovich



At a glance:

Scammers use a variety of approaches to trick people into giving them money through the use of gift card purchases. Some examples are government impostor scams (fake IRS, fake jury duty, fake law enforcement); scams where the caller pretends to be a friend or family member; and utility company scams where a caller threatens to shut off utility services.

Scammers are requesting gift cards as a form of payment because it is difficult to track the scammer down once the gift card information is provided to the scammer.

Warning Signs:

- The caller may make the matter seem urgent and pressure you into buying a gift card to pay.
- The caller tries to convince you not to hang up and says that they will wait on the line for you to purchase the gift card and read them the activation number(s).
- The caller pretends to be from a government agency such as the IRS and claims that you are in trouble for failing to pay your taxes.
- The caller poses as a family member or friend with an emergency and in need of money.
- You are asked to purchase gift cards, send a money order, or wire funds to collect a prize.

Protect Yourself:

- Never pay for services or fees with a gift card.
- Don't be afraid to hang up on someone if you suspect they may be a scammer, especially if they are using high-pressure tactics.
- Be aware that scammers are able to "spoof" the phone number that they are calling from so that it looks like they are calling from a legitimate source.
- Legitimate government offices will not call and threaten you with imprisonment or demand that you pay a debt immediately.
- If you question the legitimacy of a call, contact the agency directly by using the information you find on the agency's website. DO NOT use numbers provided by the caller, as the numbers may be fake.
- If you encounter one of these scams, report it to the Arizona Attorney General's Office.

Resources:

Arizona Attorney General's Office

www.azag.gov/complaints/consumer

Phoenix: (602) 542 - 5763, Tucson: (520) 628 - 6648
or Toll-free: (800) 352 - 8431

For additional information go to:

www.azag.gov/consumer/consumereducation

Task Force Against Senior Abuse Helpline

(602) 542 - 2124 or (844) 894 - 4735

www.azag.gov/scamalert