



# Kitsap County Sheriff's Office

## Gift Card Fraud Information For Victims

Fraud and theft account for 70% of the crime in Kitsap County. Gift cards are meant as gifts and businesses will never ask you to pay for services with a gift card. The numbers on the gift card are its value, not the physical card itself. If someone asks for the numbers on your gift card, they are attempting to steal it from you.

### Summary

In 2019 gift card scams defrauded Kitsap residents of over \$100,000. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) states if someone asks you to pay for something by putting money on a gift card "they're trying to scam you." The FTC believes there is no legitimate business that would accept payment this way. Never trust someone who calls you and asks for money! Instead, you should look up the company yourself and then call them.

### What to Look For:

Gift cards are for gifts, not for payment for business service transactions. Scammers will threaten you, tell you lies, pressure you, or belittle you into thinking they are right, and you are wrong. They will ask you to buy gift cards and give them the numbers from the card. They will electronically cash the card which then the physical card has no value.

### Common Tactics:

In all these cases the offender will call or email you first. The offender will be pushy, persuasive, threatening, and/or sound very official. Never trust someone who calls you and asks for money!

- ◇ IRS scams: they will claim you owe money to the IRS. The IRS will never call you on the phone.
- ◇ Computer virus: They want you to pay money to fix your computer. No legitimate company will contact you to repair or fix your computer. If you have a computer problem, you should find a repair person yourself.
- ◇ Hurt family member: They claim they need money for medical bills. Always check with other family members to make sure you are not being scammed.
- ◇ Lottery winnings: They claim you just have to pay taxes. The lottery check you get will bounce.
- ◇ Warrant: You are threatened with a civil fine for a warrant. Call your local police department if you suspect you have a warrant.

### What to do:

Do not fall victim to them, talk to a trusted friend or family member before paying anyone who contacted you first. Never trust someone who calls you and asks for money!

**For emergencies, call 911**

## TIPS

Gift cards are for gifts.

Never trust someone who calls you and asks for money!

Always talk to a trusted friend or family member before paying anyone who calls or emails you first.