



Kitsap County Sheriff's Office

Merchant Gift Card Fraud Alert

Local residents have been purchasing gift cards at your business to be victims of fraud! These victims are often seniors, vulnerable adults, and those on fixed incomes, but this should be no surprise to you.

They need your help. It is our obligation to work together to protect our community.

Summary:

Through education and determination, we can identify potential victims and prevent them from becoming prey without breaking company policy or customer service standards. 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 will accept payment this way. In 2019 gift card scams defraud Kitsap victims of over \$100,000.

What to Look For:

Gift cards are for gifts, customers should be happy to buy them. These are some indications the customer is being scammed:

- ◇ Buying large value gift cards and/or numerous gift cards
- ◇ They make any mention that the gift cards are for anything other than gifts
- ◇ Gift cards are their only purchase
- ◇ They were told not to talk to you about their purchase by the recipient or are on the phone being told what to do
- ◇ Having difficulty finding the money for their purchase or mention using money from savings

Identify Potential Victims:

Great customer service is achieved through relationships. Ask questions without accusations:

- ◇ Who is the lucky person getting your gift?
- ◇ Do you already have a greeting card for this gift card?
- ◇ Is this a gift for someone you know?

What to Do:

Once you identify a potential victim give them a safe space to talk. Get all the information you can about why they want to purchase the gift cards. Let them know you are concerned about their safety and provide them with the attached “Gift Card Fraud Information for Victims.”

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Gift cards are gifts

Ask questions, don't make accusations

Provide “Gift Card Fraud Information for Victims”

For emergencies, call 911

Reference Google “FTC gift card scams”