



POLICE DEPARTMENT
CITY OF BURLINGTON

December 4, 2018

MEDIA RELEASE

Telephone Scam Claiming to be the Burlington Police Department

On Tuesday, November 27, 2018, a Vermont couple were victims of a phone scam in which suspects contacted them stating they were the Burlington Police Department. They advised the couple that a family member was in custody, after she had been picked up and arrested by police. The suspects requested money in the form of gift cards in \$500 denominations. These types of scenarios can be very convincing. In this case, a woman was on the phone, crying and acting like she was a family member being held in custody. Unfortunately, the callers were convincing enough that the couple did follow through with handing over the requested funds.

Every year, thousands of people lose money to telephone scams — from a few dollars to their life savings. Scammers will say anything to cheat people out of money. Some seem very friendly — calling you by your first name, making small talk, and asking about your family, or in this case posing as a government agency to convince you to do something on behalf of a family member. If you get a call from someone you don't know who is trying to sell you something or get you to pay for something you hadn't planned for, say "No thanks" and hang up. If they pressure you to give up personal information — like your credit card or Social Security number — it's likely a scam. Hang up and report to your local police department.

The Burlington Police Department would never call and request money under *any* circumstance. If you receive a suspicious call from any government agency, you should call the agency to investigate and confirm the request.

If you receive any such calls, please report to your local police department and the Attorney General's office (Consumer Assistance (800) 649-2424). For any calls claiming to be the Burlington Police Department or within the City of Burlington, please contact us at (802)658-2704.