**Financial fraud by telephone (false representative)**

**Calling for vigilance on the part of seniors**

Montreal, December 16, 2020. - Since the beginning of last fall, the Police Service of the City of Montreal (SPVM) has found that seniors are victims of telephone financial fraud committed by fake representatives of legitimate institutions. The SPVM wants both seniors and the community at large to be aware of these techniques in order to prevent fraud. Stay vigilant and stay safe!

**Modus operandi**

The fraudster communicates with the victim by telephone by presenting themselves falsely as being an employee of a financial institution, such as a consultant or investigator, or even as a police officer. This false representative may be aware of certain banking transactions by the victim and mentions it to the victim in order to gain their trust and develop some credibility in the call. Once the connection is made, the false representative explains to the senior that they would have been a victim of fraud and offers them solutions about how they can protect their assets or obtain new debit or credit cards.

**Different schemes**

The fake representative uses different schemes to convince the victim to do things against their own interest.

The senior may be asked to:

- transform their assets into crypto-currency, e.g., Bitcoin, as a form of investment;

- reimburse the amount of the alleged fraud by purchasing pre-paid cards (gift cards, etc), e.g. money for the Google Play store or Apple App Store;

- send him his bank cards with his personal identification number (PIN) in order to obtain new ones. Sometimes, they even suggest that the victim put the prepaid cards or debit/credit cards with the corresponding PINs in an envelope so that a person may come pick them up. The false representative may also ask the victim to place this envelope under the carpet outside the front door, in the mailbox or even offer to pick it up in person.

**Prevention tips**

If you receive a call from a representative of your financial institution or a

police officer, he should already have all your information in hand.

- Do not give them any details.

- Don't rely on the Caller ID of your phone to confirm the authenticity of your caller. Software exists that can ‘spoof’ this Caller ID display so you think you can trust the source of the call. Scammers can fake this and make the call look like it’s coming from a legitimate source.

- If in doubt, hang up and verify the authenticity of the call by communicating directly with your institution. Find the correct number on the internet or elsewhere and call to confirm any issues.

- No police department, goverment organization, or financial institution would ever request funds in crypto-currency or pre-paid gift cards. Asking this of you in order to repay a debt or to protect your assets is a sure sign of a fraud.

- Never give your bank cards or PINs to anyone under any circumstances.

In the event of fraud or a situation that appears to be fraudulent:

- Check the validity of the appeal; contact your institution yourself using an official telephone number.

- You should not be ashamed if you are a victim: the fraudster is a

excellent manipulator. Denounce it.

**To report a fraud**

- In case of an emergency, call 9-1-1 to reach the SPVM or your service.

local police if you live outside of Montreal.

- Contact the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre

at 1-888-495-8501 - antifraudcentre-centreantifraude.ca

- If you are a victim or witness of fraud or theft, contact :

the Seniors Abuse Help Line at 514 489-2287 - aidebusaines.ca;

- Info Crime-Montreal, anonymously and confidentially

at 514 393-1133 - infocrimemontreal.ca.

- If it is not urgent, but you wish to contact the SPVM,

you can do so by contacting your local (PDQ) by calling 514 280-01XX (XX is the number for the PDQ).

**For more information**

SPVM, Seniors' Zone: spvm.qc.ca/en/Aines

Source: Service de police de la Ville de Montréal

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