



INTEGRITY \* RESPECT \* LAWS AND THE CONSTITUTION \* ACCOUNTABILITY \* PROBLEM SOLVING \* PROFESSIONALISM

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

**Captain Robert Redmond & Sgt. Andy Breidenich  
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**April 2, 2014**

### **Troy Police Department Warns Citizens of Phone Scam**

**On March 31, 2014 the Troy Police Department received a report of a fraudulent phone solicitation complaint where the suspects claimed to be from the Oakland County Sheriff's.**

**The suspects utilized the names of actual Sheriff Department employees and stated to the call taker they missed "jury duty and a warrant was issued for their arrest." The suspects then advised the call taker they needed to "provide money via a pre-paid Green Dot Visa Card to clear the warrant." The call taker did not respond to the suspect and then called the Oakland County Sheriff's to confirm the call was fraudulent. The Troy Police Department would like to warn all citizens to be on guard against any call or e-mail request for personal information or money. The suspects will use any authority (personal – posing as a relative; or official – posing as a government agency) to attempt to deceive and scam.**

**If you receive a call like this or other scam attempt to defraud you – please contact the Better Business Bureau and report the attempted scam. You can also report the scam on the BBB website for Metro-Detroit area:**

**<http://www.bbb.org/detroit/get-consumer-help/scam-source/scam-or-complaint/>**

**If you believe you have been defrauded please contact your local law enforcement jurisdiction!**

**Below are the BBB's top 10 scam attempts. Please be aware of the types of scams attempted to assist in prevention!**

## **BBB Top Ten Scams of 2013**

**Medical Alert Scam** – A new twist to the telemarketing scam hit 2013 hard. With promises of a “free” medical alert system, the scam targeted seniors and caretakers and claimed to be offering the system free of charge because a family member or friend had already paid for it. In many cases, seniors were asked to provide their bank account or credit information to “verify” their identity and, as a result, were charged the monthly \$35 service fee. The system, of course, never arrived and the seniors were left with a charge they had trouble getting refunded. Easy rule of thumb – be wary of “free” offers that require your personal information upfront and always verify with the supposed friend or family member that the caller says paid for the service.

**Auction Reseller Scam** – Many people turn to Ebay and other online auctions sites to sell used items they no longer need, and relatively new electronics seem to do especially well. But scammers have figured out a way to fool sellers into shipping goods without receiving payment. Usually the buyer claims it’s an “emergency” of some sort – a child’s birthday, a member of the military shipping out – and asks the seller to ship the same day. The seller receives an email that looks like it’s from PayPal confirming the payment, but emails are easy to fake. Always confirm payment in your Ebay and PayPal accounts before shipping, especially to an overseas address.

**Arrest Warrant Scam** – This one seemed to really take off last autumn. In this scam, con artists are taking advantage of technology that can change what is visible on Caller ID, and allowing them to pose as the office of the local sheriff or other law enforcement agency. They call to say there is a warrant out for your arrest, but that you can pay a fine in order to avoid criminal charges. Of course, these “police” don’t take credit cards; only a wire transfer or pre-paid debit card will do. Sometimes these scams seem very personal; the scammer may refer to a loan or other financial matter. It may just be a lucky guess, but don’t be fooled into thinking you are about to be arrested.

**Invisible Home Improvements** – Home improvement scams vary little from year to year, and most involve some type of shoddy workmanship from unlicensed or untrained workers. The hardest for homeowners to detect, and therefore the easiest for scammers to pull off, are repairs or improvements to the areas of your home that you can’t see: roofs, chimneys, air ducts, crawl spaces, etc. Scammers may simply knock at your door offering a great deal because they were “in the neighborhood,” but more and more they are using telemarketing, email and even social media to reach homeowners. Helpful videos on YouTube can add legitimacy to a contractor, but consumers have no way of



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knowing if the video is real or “borrowed” from a legitimate contractor. Check out home contractors at [bbb.org](http://bbb.org) before saying yes.

**Casting Call Scam** – This is not as widespread as some other scams, but it seems to have really been on the increase in recent years, thanks to the popularity of television talent shows like “American Idol” and “Project Runway.” Scammers pose as agents or talent scouts looking for actors, singers, models, reality show contestants, etc., and use phony audition notices to fool aspiring performers into paying to try out for parts that don't exist. There are several ways this plays out. It can simply be an unscrupulous way to sell acting lessons, photography services, etc., or it can be an outright scam for things like fees for online “applications” or upcoming “casting calls.” Even worse, the information provided on an online application could be everything a scammer needs for identity theft.

**Foreign Currency Scam** – Investments in foreign currency can sound like a great idea, and scammers frequently use real current events and news stories to make their pitches even more appealing. They advertise an easy investment with high return and low risk when you purchase Iraqi Dinar, Vietnamese Dong or, most recently, the Egyptian Pound. The plan is that, when those governments revalue their currencies, increasing their worth against the dollar, you just sell and cash in. Unlike previous hoaxes, you may even take possession of real currency. The problem is that they will be very difficult to sell, and it's extremely unlikely they will ever significantly increase in value.

**Scam Texts** – With online and mobile banking skyrocketing, it's not a surprise that scams quickly follow. One major tactic recently is the use of scam texts, known as “smishing,” to steal personal information. They look like a text alert from your bank, asking you to confirm information or “reactivate your debit card” by following a link on your smart phone. Banks of all sizes have been targeted, and details of the scam vary, but the outcome is the same: scammers get your banking information, maybe even your ATM number and PIN. You may even inadvertently download malicious software that gives the scammer access to anything on your phone.

**Do Not Call Scams** – The National Do Not Call Registry (U.S.) or the National Do Not Call List (Canada) offer consumers a free way to reduce telemarketing calls. Scammers call anyway, of course, and they've even found a way to scam consumers by pretending to be a government official calling to sign you up or confirming your previous

participation on the Dot Not call list! In one variation, scammers ask for personal information, such as your name, address and Social Security/Social Insurance number. In another, scammers try to charge a fee to join the registry. Either way, just hang up. These services are free, but sharing personal information with a scammer could cost you a lot.

**Fake Friend Scam** – Did you ever get a Friend Request on Facebook from someone you already thought was your Friend? If you hit Accept, you may have just friended a scammer. A popular recent scam has been the theft of people’s online identities to create fake profiles, which can be used in a variety of ways. A new Friend can learn a lot about you to scam you later, “recommend” sketchy websites that download malware, use your account to scrap information on your other Friends, even impersonate a military officer or other trustworthy person to perpetrate a romance scam. Be careful on social media, keep your privacy settings high, and don’t share confidential information. You can’t always be sure that your Friends are really your friends.

### **Scam of the Year: Affordable Care Act Scam**

Scammers had a field day with the Affordable Care Act (“Obamacare”), using it as a way to fool Americans into sharing their personal information. Scammers would call claiming to be from the federal government and saying the would-be victim needed a new insurance card or Medicare card. However, before they can mail the card, they need to collect personal information. Scammers do a lot to make their requests seem credible. For example, they may have your bank’s routing number and ask you to provide your account number. Or, they may ask for your credit card or Social Security number, Medicare ID, or other personal information. But sharing personal information with a scammer puts you at risk for identity theft.

### **More information for consumers:**

- For more information on these and other scams, go to [BBB Scamstopper](#). Sign up for our Scam Alerts and learn about new scams as soon as we do.
- For more information on investment scams, go to [BBB Smart Investing](#), a partnership with the FINRA Investor Education Foundation.
- To search for a business in the U.S. or Canada, or to find your local BBB, go to [BBB.org](#).
- For information on charities, go to [Give.org](#).
- For information on U.S. government services, go to: [USA.gov](#).
- For information on Canadian government services, go to [Service Canada](#).



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