



Abbotsford Police Department

2838 Justice Way, Abbotsford, BC V2T 3P5 Phone (604)859-5225 Fax (604)859-2527

Chief Constable Mike Serr

“Strength in Community”

NEWS RELEASE

Police warning: Be CAUTIOUS about providing access to your computer – FRAUD ALERT

This past weekend, thieves once again struck an unsuspecting Abbotsford citizen, defrauding her of \$15,900 through an elaborate phone scam.

The victim received a phone call from a female pretending to be a concerned security officer from a local bank. The caller advised that the bank was alerted to a suspicious transaction in the victim’s account. The fraudster had the last four digits of the victim’s bank cards and used this information to convince the victim of her legitimacy.

The victim was advised that in order to recover her funds, she would be required to purchase gift cards and provide their numbers and PINs to the bank. The victim complied with this request.

The victim was then asked to help the police and bank track down the thieves, which included providing the caller with remote access to her computer and personal bank account. The victim was directed to make further gift card purchases using a \$20,000 deposit which appeared as a credit to her bank account. After making the purchases and providing the additional gift card numbers and PINs, the victim observed that the deposited \$20,000 had been removed.

Sgt. Judy Bird notes “Many citizens who are victimized are either embarrassed, or actually believe that they are in trouble, so they don’t question the transaction.” Phone calls, text

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messages or email threatening arrest, demanding immediate payment, or demanding payment in unusual forms – such as gift cards or Bitcoin - are SUSPICIOUS.

How to protect yourself & others...

👉 Beware of “recovery scams”. Victims of fraud are often targeted a second or third time with the promise of recovering money previously lost. Always do your due diligence and never send money to recover money.

👉 Stay current. Check out the Canadian Anti-Fraud center for new scams.

👉 Be pro-active. Educate family, friends, neighbours and co-workers on mass marketing frauds. YOU may prevent someone else from becoming a victim.

How do I report fraud and spam?

The Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre estimates that less than 5% of mass marketing fraud is ever reported. Do not open unsolicited emails when the sender is unknown. Please follow the steps in this link if you have been defrauded: <https://bit.ly/2Ggxiqb>. Spam & related violations can be reported to enforcement agencies through the Spam Reporting Centre at <https://bit.ly/2ue9VuB>.

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Sgt Judy Bird
Media Relations Officer
Abbotsford Police Department
jbird@abbypd.ca
604-864-4899



Sgt Judy Bird.....	Phone (604) 864-4899
Abbotsford Police Media Relations Officer	askmedia@abbypd.ca
2838 Justice Way, Abbotsford, BC V2T 3P5.....	Fax: (604) 859-2527

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