

The Gwinnett County Police Department and many other law enforcement agencies have seen a rise in a particular type of scam where suspects contact victims by phone and claim they have an outstanding debt of some variety, threatening consequences if the debt is not paid.

In recent weeks, there has been an increase in callers claiming to be members of the Gwinnett County Police Department. In addition to posing as the Police Department, the suspects claim they represent:

- A power company (or other utility) and service will be immediately terminated if payment isn't received.
- A relative who has been arrested and needs money for bail.
- A law enforcement agency and immediate payment is needed for an outstanding warrant/ticket or the victim will be arrested.
- The IRS and back taxes are owed.
- That a pre-approved loan is available (or a lottery has been won), if victim will send a small start-up fee.
- An immigration authority claiming a person will be deported if payment isn't received.



This scam has a large number of variations, with more coming to light each day. The common thread is that suspects ask for payment on a Green Dot card or similar prepaid debit card, which is appealing to criminals because the money loaded on the cards is easily accessible and the transactions are difficult—and often impossible—to track.

Scammers are using a computer program to make the victim's caller ID show the Police Department or another legitimate agency's phone number. Remember that caller ID can be made to show any number the scammer wants, which makes the scam more believable. **Remember, the Gwinnett County Police Department will never ask for payment of any sort over the phone.**

### Prevention tips

- Be suspicious of anyone calling and demanding immediate payment, especially by Green Dot card or wire transfer.
- Ask for the caller's identity and independently contact the agency. Do not call the number that appears on your caller ID.
- Do not disclose personal or financial information to unsolicited callers or by email.
- Do not wire money or provide bank account numbers or financial transaction card numbers (credit, debit, Green Dot, or any other prepaid card) to anyone you don't know.
- Law enforcement and government agencies will not demand payment over the phone by a Green Dot card.

If you are a victim of this scam or received a phone call from a scammer, please call the **Gwinnett County Police Department** at **770.513.5000**.