

**CRIME PREVENTION TIPS:**

- Know who you're dealing with. If you cannot verify the person is who they are treat it as a scam.
- Guard your personal information. Do not provide your personnel information to anyone over the phone or email that you do not know. This is especially true if they are the ones that called you.
- Be cautious about unsolicited emails. Scammers will often disguise emails to gain access to your computer. The email may read "FedEx Delivery Confirmation".
- Don't believe promises of easy or free money.
- Check your credit report regularly. Federal law allows you to get one free credit report per 12 months.
- File your taxes as soon as possible and do not delay otherwise the scammers will.



**EMERGENCY 9-1-1**

**Non Emergency (863) 993-4700**

For more information on frauds visit [IC3.Gov](http://IC3.Gov) and click on the IC3 fraud alert brochure

**South West Florida Crime Stoppers**

**1-800-780-TIPS**

**Local Tips (863)491-6767**

**DESOTO COUNTY  
SHERIFF**



**"FRAUD ALERT TIPS"  
Fraud Watch 2018**



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**EMERGENCY 9-1-1**

In 2017 the Desoto County Sheriff's Office received numerous calls for service involving scams. Desoto County residents have lost thousands of dollars to these scams. The Sheriff's Office has taken an active preventative role in an attempt to alert citizens of Desoto County on what scams to look for.

Note: SCAMS are ever evolving and constantly changing.

Common SCAMS of 2017

**1. The arrest warrant scam.** This scam involves the threat of arrest. The scammer informs you that there is a warrant for your arrest and requests payment via gift card or other forms. The phone number on the caller ID at times may indicate the call is being made by your local law enforcement agency. This is known as "spoofing". Spoofing is a paid service allowing the scammer to have whatever number he wants to appear on your caller ID. This scam may also involve the threat of a family member being in jail and bond money being requested.

**2. The craigslist or other sales add scam.**

This scam involves the purchase of a vehicle or any other item. The scammer will collect payment and then try and collect additional payment for "shipping" or "insurance". The scam is at times sophisticated and involves emails and sometimes a fake PayPal account. Citizens of Desoto have lost on average \$10,000 or more to this scam.

**3. The "your computer has a virus" scam.**

The scammer tells the victim that their computer has a virus. The scammer then walks the victim through the process of allowing them to gain access into their computer with the intent of removing the virus. Once access is granted the scammer usually makes various threats unless money is paid. The scammer at this time has access to everything on the computer including personnel items.

**4. The publisher clearing house scam.** This scam involves a letter being sent with a check. The letter will instruct you to call a number to claim the prize. The scammer will then instruct you to deposit the check and then send a portion of the money back to them for "taxes" or "fees". The problem is that the

check is not real. Your financial institution will honor cashing the check as you are a client. You will then send the money to the scammer. The financial institution will try to clear the check only to realize it belongs to a closed or fictitious account. The bank will then take the money out of your account and you will be out the amount of money you sent the scammer.

**5. FPL scam.** The scammer will call indicating he works for the power company and threatens to shut your power off due to late or no payment being received.

**6. The IRS scam.** The scammer will call informing you that you have not paid your taxes. The scammer threaten to have you arrested unless the unpaid taxes are paid.

These are the common scams of 2017. Please keep in mind that there are thousands of varying scams. If in doubt feel free to call the Sheriff's Office.