



PARTNERS IN CRIME PREVENTION

MARCH/APRIL 2020

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COVID-19- CRIME UPDATE

COVID-19 has affected many aspects of our lives including our health and the nation’s economy. Crime has also changed as criminals adjust their activities to take advantage of opportunities to steal from honest people.

Scammers have adjusted their operations to take advantage of our concerns, confusion, and new governmental programs.

The prime example is the recent reports of a Nigerian fraud ring, named “Scattered Canary” by security researcher, that fraudulently applied for unemployment in other people’s names, some of whom still had jobs. The scammers would have unemployment checks sent to their own addresses or to addresses of money mules, people who unwittingly or wittingly help the scammers launder the funds. Scattered Canary may have received the personal information needed to make the claims from data breaches that they conducted or that they purchased from others on the dark web.

The stay at home order has raised concerns for survivors of domestic violence and abused children. The requirement to stay at home gives abusers more control and cuts off opportunities for the survivors to communicate with others outside of the household. Initially, calls

for services and support decrease. After a few weeks call volumes increased to more normal levels.

With the closure of schools and school activities, reports of child abuse and neglect to Child Protective Services have decreased. This is concerning because many mandatory reporters, such as teachers, coaches, school nurses and counselors are not seeing the children like they normally do.

Other concerns include an increase in speeding violations on our roads and highways. The Washington State Patrol (WSP) has regularly reported on its Twitter accounts of issuing speeding tickets for speeds in some cases well over 100 mph. The Lynnwood Police Department reports stopping speeders in residential neighborhoods going up to 30 mph over the speed limit. The fact that traffic has been lighter over the last few months does not give drivers the permission to drive over the speed limit.

On another note, with the lifting of some outdoor COVID-19 restrictions and the warmer weather people are taking the opportunity to go outdoors. There are dangers to be aware of when you are in the mountains this time of year. We ask that when you are outdoors that you “recreate responsibly.”



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COVID-19 – PROTECTING YOUR MONEY & ID

Here are some tips,

Fake cures– There currently are no cures or drugs, oils, or pills that can prevent or cure COVID-19 that are approved by the FDA. Scientists are still working on developing vaccines and drugs to alleviate its affects.

Stimulus Check Scams– Neither the IRS nor any other governmental agency will call, text, or email you to verify your personal information. To find the status of your check or ensure the accuracy of your information with the IRS go to this link- <https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/economic-impact-payments>

Financial Fraud- Be wary of any get rich quick scheme.

Imposter scams– The CDC and WHO will not send you a personal email or text with COVID-19 information. DO NOT click on any links! delete the email or text!

COVID-19 – SCAMS

The onset of COVID-19 demonstrates that scammers are extremely flexible in adapting their techniques.

Scammers keep up with the news to find situations that they can take advantage of. They will tug at your charitable spirit to try to convince you to “donate” money for a cause. They may also try to scare you into action by playing on your fears, by charging for a fake service, or by convincing you to give them your Personally Identifiable Information (PII) to fulfill some sort of fake requirement.

COVID-19 is the perfect storm for scammers. It came on with a blast of information overloading our senses. Being a new coronavirus, there has been enough uncertainty to cause apprehension and fear in many people. To add to that apprehension is the economic impact from the measures required by public health professionals in an attempt to control the virus and its spread in order to save lives.

Typically, scammers are after your money and your identity. COVID-19 has provided scammers the opportunity to use the following techniques:

- **Fake cures.** The Federal Trade Commission and Federal Drug Administration have been challenging people who make false claims about products that supposedly prevent or cure COVID-19.

The products have no scientific basis and do not have FDA approval.

- **Stimulus Check Scams.** Many scammers have been calling or sending text messages tied to the ongoing distribution of stimulus checks. Posing as IRS agents they may ask to “verify” your personal information to ensure that you receive your check. Or send a text with a link to verify your information.
- **Financial Fraud.** Scammers are offering get rich quick schemes tied to products that “will make a killing as cures for COVID-19.” They may offer scarce products such as PPE at premium prices. And they may ask for charitable donations for fake charities.
- **Email compromise/Imposter Scams.** You may receive an email or a text claiming to be from a legitimate agency such as the CDC or WHO or the state or local public health departments with urgent or helpful information about COVID-19. All you have to do is click on the link.

Added to the list is the revelation of scammers making unemployment claims to the Washington State Employment Security Department using the personal information of legitimate people, many of whom are employed.

COVID-19- DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

For some people, the “stay home, stay safe” order may be more of a stay home and try to survive. People who are with an abusive partner may be in a situation where they cannot escape emotional or physical pain from their partner. Nor can they easily call a friend for support or 911 in an emergency.

Children who experience abuse are also in danger. May is a busy month for reports to and referrals from Child Protective Services. Not so this year. Normally, children are around adults who can observe changes in the children and be confidants such as teachers, coaches, and advisors. If you are in an abusive situation at home, safety planning and self-care are very important.

Safety plan. Make a plan for where you would go or who you would trust in case you are in a personal crisis. Also, learn the resources that can help you.

Self-care. Do things that help you reduce stress for you and your family. Find healthy things that work for you. Find quiet spaces when and where you can. Look for virtual ways to connect with friends and help.

If you know someone who is in danger of domestic violence you can support them.

Contact them, listen to what they have to say. Use the phone, video chat, text messages, whatever works for the both of you. Approach the conversation with the attitude of “What do you need? How can I help?”

Don't judge, blame, or pressure. Whatever

course they take, they need to decide for themselves what to do. Don't pressure them to take any particular course of action.

Know about resources. Know where your friend, and you, can get help. Anyone can call the help lines. Counselors can give you help as well as your friend.

Resources that can help you or anyone in an abusive relationship include,

911 for emergency situations- Also, you can text 911 if it is dangerous to talk on the phone.

Providence Intervention Center for Assault and Abuse-

(425) 252-4800 (24/7)

<https://washington.providence.org/locations-directory/i/intervention-center-for-assault-and-abuse-everett>

Domestic Violence Services-

425-25-ABUSE (425) 252-2673 (24/7)

<https://dvs-snoco.org/>

Dawson Place Child Advocacy Center-

(425) 789-3000 (M_F, 8-4:30)

<https://www.dawsonplace.org/>

For more information, check out this link from the Snohomish Health District-

www.snohd.org/Blog.aspx?CID=2

CRIME TIPS- SPEEDING-

With the Stay at Home order, traffic on the highways have lightened up, but the WSP and the Sheriff's Office have noticed an increase in people speeding and driving dangerously. 7 people have died in traffic accidents in just two months. Law enforcement has issued many speeding tickets, some drivers reaching speeds over 100 mph.

The rules of the road haven't changed. When you get into your vehicle, please get out if it safely.

MAIL THEFT-

With stimulus checks coming to many people in the mail, the danger of mail theft has increased. Check your mail daily and do not leave it overnight.

Use the USPS Informed Delivery-

<https://informedelivery.usps.com/box/pages/intro/start.action>

SEARCH AND RESCUE- RECREATE RESPONSIBLY

With the easing of some COVID-19 restrictions, including some park and outdoor recreation areas, we all are motivated to go outside and get some fresh air. The Sheriff's Office and the Snohomish County Volunteer Search and Rescue unit urges you to be responsible when you are at our parks and trails.

If you are going to be near the water at our rivers and lakes, remember that the water is cold at this time of year with water temperatures of around 50 degrees. If you fall in, you can go into shock in seconds and not be able to swim to safety. And remember to wear a life vest if you go out on the water in your boat or kayak.

If you are going out to our parks and trails:

Know before you go. Check the status of the place that you want to visit. If it is closed, don't go. If it is crowded, have a Plan B.

Practice physical distancing. Adventure only with your immediate household. Be prepared to cover your nose and mouth and give others space. If

you are sick, stay home.

Stay close to home. This is not the time to travel long distances to recreate. Most places are only open for day use.

Plan ahead. Prepare for facilities to be closed, pack a lunch and bring essentials like hand sanitizer and a face covering.

Play it safe. Slow down and choose lower-risk activities to reduce your risk of injury. Search and rescue operations and health care resources are both strained.

Leave no trace. Respect public lands and communities and take *all* your garbage with you.

For more information, go to-

<https://www.recreateresponsibly.org/>

#RecreateResponsibly

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| KNOW BEFORE YOU GO  | PLAN AHEAD  | STAY CLOSE TO HOME  |
| PRACTICE PHYSICAL DISTANCING  | PLAY IT SAFE  | LEAVE NO TRACE  |

OFFICE OF NEIGHBORHOODS

MAKING OUR NEIGHBORHOODS SAFER

<https://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/311/Office-of-Neighborhoods>

Homeless Outreach-
Sgt. Ryan Boyer
Phone: (425) 308-0037
Email: neighborhood-watch@snoco.org

Nuisance Properties-
Deputy David Chitwood
Email: David.Chitwood@snoco.org

SHERIFF'S OFFICE CRIME PREVENTION WEB PAGE:
<http://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/289/Crime-Prevention>

NEWSLETTER INFO

EDITOR

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If you have questions regarding this newsletter or any articles that appear in it, please contact the editor at neighborhoodwatch@snoco.org



Snohomish County Sheriff's Office: 425-388-3845

<http://snohomishcountywa.gov/303/Anonymous-Tips>

Crime Stoppers of Puget Sound: 1-800-222-8477