

*This message is sent on behalf of the Department of Public Safety.*

## Scams targeting URI community

February 10, 2020

Recently, a scam has been reported where the perpetrators are victimizing people using the app “TikTok.” Users of the app are told that they will be paid a fee for having text conversations with other users of the app. At some point during the conversation, a request will be made to cash a check (a cashier’s check or a personal check), usually for a substantial amount of money. The scammer will then send the check to the victim and promise to let them keep a portion of the money for cashing it for them. They will then have you use another app, such as “Venmo” or another type of cash transfer application to send over the agreed upon amount. The problem is that the check sent to the victim is fraudulent, and once the funds are removed from your account to cash the fraudulent check and sent to the scammer, the money is gone from your account. The transfer of funds takes place and you will be unable to recover your money.

Students and the URI Community should be aware that in all cases where a stranger sends you a check and then asks you send back money, **THAT’S A SCAM**. The use of the TikTok app is another variation of the similar telephone and email scams that have occurred previously. Students living off campus (especially those in Narragansett or in other off campus housing) might not know about scam calls or emails and may think they are linked to the University. **These calls and emails are scams and no information should be given to the caller.**

Remember, **DO NOT** give out any credit card information, social security numbers, bank information, address, or any other personal information. These calls are cases of fraud. Report the incident to the University Police Department at 401-874-2121. You may also report incidents to your local or state police. You can visit the Federal Trade Commission for more information at their website, <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2018/09/anatomy-fake-check-scam>.