

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

Scams targeting URI community

April 9, 2020

Recently, a scam has been reported where the perpetrators are victimizing the community via email. The email recipients are offered a job, as an “assistant”, and the emails solicit more information from the intended victim. At some point during multiple email exchanges, 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 using Federal Express and promise to let them keep a portion of the money after they complete different tasks for the scammer. They may have the victim use another app, such as “Venmo” or another type of cash transfer application to send over the agreed upon amount. Another common element of scams involves having the victim purchase gift cards and give the number and PIN code to the scammer. Remember, the check sent to the victim in this scam is fraudulent. The funds are removed from your account to cash the fraudulent check, and 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 gift cards or cash transfer apps 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 person.**

Remember, **DO NOT** give out any credit card information, social security numbers, bank information, address, or any other personal information. These 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>.