NEWS RELEASE

**Incident Date and Time:** Tuesday, March 17, 2020

**Location:** San Mateo County

**Type of Crime/Incident:** Increase in Phone and Internet Scams

**Summary:** San Mateo County, CA — SCAM ALERT

The San Mateo County Sheriff’s Office is urging citizens to be wary of new phone and internet scams popping up within the past week. The Sheriff’s Office has been made aware of emails and websites promising vital information about the coronavirus pandemic that’s sweeping the globe. Some are scams that push malware and disinformation while others attempt to steal passwords and personal information.

Scammers are attempting to capitalize on this time of uncertainty in our community. Readers should be highly skeptical of emails and websites that claim to provide information or goods related to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. The key fact to confirm is the primary source of those communications. One of the most reliable sources for legitimate coronavirus-related information is the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. Communications from local departments of health can also be helpful but only when the emails or websites can be confirmed as coming from a legitimate agency. These departments can easily be found through Web searches—for instance, the San Mateo County Health Department.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, San Mateo County Health, and City of San Carlos websites contain reliable, frequently updated information.

- [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- [www.smchealth.org/coronavirus](http://www.smchealth.org/coronavirus)
- [www.cityofsancarlos.org/coronavirus](http://www.cityofsancarlos.org/coronavirus)

Additionally, if someone calls you saying they’re with the Sheriff’s Office asking for money – it’s a scam. We will NEVER call you and ask for money... for ANYTHING. Do not give anyone cash, bank information, cash or gift cards, green dot cards, or anything of value.

Please remain vigilant and never provide personal information over the phone (like Social Security numbers and credit card information) unless you initiated the phone call. Anyone who receives a scam call or would like additional information is asked to call **650-363-4911**.

**Use your judgment and be ready to help others. If it seems suspicious, it probably is.**

**Written by:** Sgt. Jake Trickett, San Carlos Police Bureau

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