



Naval Criminal Investigative Service
Office of Strategic Communications
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CONTACT: NCISPUBLICAFFAIRS@NCIS.NAVY.MIL

Sailors Falling Victim to Financial Scam in the Hampton Roads Area

HAMPTON ROADS, Va. – NCIS is warning service members across the Hampton Roads area about a loan scam that targets financial institutions who primarily cater to service members, resulting in major financial losses to the victims. The affected mid-Atlantic region includes Chesapeake, Norfolk, Virginia Beach, and Portsmouth

Victims are approached in public areas, typically by more than one person on foot or in a vehicle, and asked where the nearest financial institution is located and/or if they bank with a specific financial institution. If told yes, the suspected scammer will have the individual meet at the financial institution where they will ask to use the victim's phone for various reasons, such as they misplaced their debit card or they are locked out of their account. Often times the victim is bribed with an amount of money from the suspected scammer for helping them out.

NCIS reminds service members to:

- Never to give their phone to another person.
- Never offer financial transaction assistance to persons approaching in a parking lot.
- Never unlock their phone or financial accounts in the presence of unfamiliar persons, as this presents opportunity of fraud.

Most financial institutions will not reimburse the victim for funds stolen when the victim has provided their phone to another individual or unlocked their banking app.

If a service member feels threatened or pressured into providing their phone to another individual, the service member should attempt to leave the area immediately and contact their local police department by calling 911.

If you believe you have been targeted or are a victim of this scam, immediately contact your local police department to file a report, NCIS and your command (if military), and notify your bank.

Additionally, individuals are asked to notify NCIS via the NCIS Tips mobile app or on the NCIS webpage: <https://www.ncis.navy.mil/Resources/NCIS-Tips/>. DON personnel are reminded to verify sources of information and be wary of any unsolicited contact with persons or businesses. If you believe you are a victim of a crime, reach out to your local NCIS office immediately.

Please submit media queries to ncispublicaffairs@ncis.navy.mil.

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