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POLICE DEPARTMENT - A NATIONALLY ACCREDITED LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JUNE 22, 2023

POLICE WARN OF FAKE JEWELRY SCAM IN MUSCATINE

Scam artists attempting to sell jewelry for cash to unsuspecting victims

MUSCATINE, Iowa – Fake jewelry scams have been reported in Muscatine and surrounding areas with the Muscatine Police Department (MPD) warning shoppers to think twice before purchasing ‘gold’ on the streets. The MPD is alerting the public about the potential scam situation that local residents have been falling victim to.



The scam starts with the victim being approached in a parking lot, usually as they are leaving a business. The individuals approaching them offer some kind of story of how they are strapped for cash and need money urgently.

“The individual/s will offer to sell the victim some of their belongings for cash,” Steve Snider,

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Assistant Police Chief, said. "In our local cases it has been gold jewelry."

If the victim agrees, the individuals will offer to follow them to an ATM and make the transaction. The jewelry being sold is fake (not real gold) and the victim ends up paying a considerable amount of money for something that has little to no value.

"These scam artists can be very convincing as they work to gain their victim's trust," Snider said.

This scenario has played out at least twice within the past month in Muscatine and is also known to have happened in surrounding communities. During the two local incidents, the suspects worked as a pair and as a group. Both victims described the suspects as being of Middle Eastern descent.

The Muscatine Police Department is encouraging anyone who is approached by these individuals to make mental notes about the suspects with as many details as possible including race, age, identifying marks and/or characteristics, vehicle description, license plate, number of people in the group, and any other information that may be useful in helping to identify.

Call 911 and report the encounter as soon as it is safe to do so.

Although there have been no reports of any weapons being displayed, reference of a weapon was made during one of local incidents.

"Please do not try to confront these individuals on your own," Snider said. "Be a good witness and report it to the local authorities."

Law enforcement encourages shoppers to purchase jewelry only at reputable dealers and to think before they hand over their cash.

If you have been a victim of the scam, you are encouraged to contact the Muscatine Police



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