

The Virgin Islands Consortium

New Telephone Scam Involves Individuals Who Claim To Be Sick

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ST. CROIX -- The Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs through a press release issued late Monday is again warning residents against making available their hard-earned money to scammers. This time the department is alerting the public on a new telephone scam that plays with the heartstrings of residents while extracting sometimes hundreds of dollars from innocent individuals.

According to DLCA, in this scam, the caller pretends to be an individual that is sick and or has sustained some injury and is in the hospital. The caller may or may not identify himself to the call recipient but requests that the call recipient purchase phone cards of a value in the hundreds of dollars so that an overseas relative of the so-called sick

individual could make a call to them or that the scammer can call the overseas relative.

The caller provides a number for the scammed individual to call after purchasing the phone card. The call recipient is then instructed to call the provided number and give the phone card number to the person pretending to be sick. Once the call recipient has provided the phone card number, the scam is complete and the scammed individual has lost possibly hundreds of dollars in phone card fees, according to DLCA.

This scam is of the type that preys on the sentiments of individuals who are sensitive to the plight of others, DLCA says, warning the public "to be very wary of those who seek to take advantage of human emotions."

The release added: "Whether it be the elation of having been told that you have won or are entitled to large sums of money or that someone is sick and in need of assistance from a Good Samaritan, the call recipient must ask questions to ascertain whether the caller is genuine or is a scammer. Do not make spur of the moment decisions with your hard earned money without asking probing question of a caller. A bright line rule is to never do financial transactions over the phone."

DLCA is asking residents to report all scams to its offices at 713.3522 in St. Croix or 714.3522 in St. Thomas/St. John.