

Guidance on text and email scams - from North Yorks Police Including Inland Revenue Tax Rebate scam

NYP are receiving many reports about various text and email 'warnings' in circulation and are being requested to send them out via Ringmaster.

In many (not all) cases these messages are hoaxes or scams to just generate internet traffic where email addresses can be skimmed off and used to send further spam mail. Messages often include reference to a local area or statements such as "it happened to my friend" to dramatise the message and make it seem much more personal and more credible to increase the likelihood of you sending it on.

These obviously cause concern to the recipients so we would advise that you check messages before distributing them. There are various sites on the internet where you can check these out, some examples are below, or you can just put the key points of the message in a Google search and you will find information on the messages.

<http://www.safefromscams.co.uk/> <http://www.hoax-slayer.com/> <http://www.snopes.com/>

Not all messages are totally fictitious, there are elements of truth in many, for example the current one doing the rounds warning about PDS (Parcel Delivery Service) was a true scam in late 2005 but despite claims in the warning, the scam is not reoccurring in 2010 that we are aware of.

There are also some elements of common good practice in many of these warnings, the most common of which is that financial institutions such as banks or credit card companies will never ask for security information (either over the telephone or by email) and therefore you should never give it out or click on links in the emails, no matter how convincing the story. Our advice is that if you are concerned and think it may be genuine, end the call and make direct contact with the credit card company or bank yourself using numbers either on your cards or bank statements and check with them or logon to the website properly, never through emailed links as these go to very convincing replica (phishing) sites that will capture all your login details if you enter them.

We hope this advice helps reduce any concerns you may have about incidents of such crimes actually occurring in North Yorkshire and provides some useful advice.

Tax Rebate Scam

An email offering those of you who file your own returns a tax rebate does not come from HM Revenue and Customs and should be forwarded to phishing@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk before being deleted from your email account and from your computer.

A cleverly-cloned website asks for your credit card or bank details--which you know not to give out. You risk having your bank account emptied and personal details sold to criminal gangs.