



KLAMATH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Sheriff Chris Kaber

3300 Vandenberg Rd
Klamath Falls, OR 97603
(541) 883-5130
sheriff@co.klamath.or.us

Media Release

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Re: Phone Scam

Contact: Brandon Fowler – PIO / Emergency Manager
bfowler@co.klamath.or.us

KCSO has received multiple reports from people receiving phone calls indicating their child has been kidnapped and demanding a ransom. The reporting parties noted that they heard background screaming and other noise that they believed was recorded. The incidents appeared to be originating from a foreign number possibly from Mexico beginning with country code +52.

Virtual kidnapping is an extortion scam where a caller pretends to have kidnapped a child or relative and demands payment. The scammers will often make it appear they know significant details about their loved ones. They threaten extreme violence against the victim and imply that they have hacked your cell phone.

To avoid becoming a victim of this type of extortion scheme the FBI recommends looking for the following possible indicators:

- Incoming calls from an outside area code, or foreign telephone number
- Calls do not come from the kidnapped victim's phone
- Callers go to great lengths to keep you on the phone
- Callers prevent you from calling or locating the "kidnapped" victim
- Ransom money is only accepted via wire transfer service

If you receive a virtual kidnapping phone call:

- Try to slow the situation down. Request to speak to the victim directly. Ask, "How do I know my loved one is okay?"
- If they don't let you speak to the victim, ask them to describe the victim or describe the vehicle they drive, if applicable.
- Listen carefully to the voice of the kidnapped victim if they speak.
- Attempt to call, text, or contact the victim via social media. Request the victim call back from his or her cell phone.
- While staying on the line with alleged kidnappers, try to call the alleged kidnap victim from another phone.

The Klamath County Sheriff's Office encourages you to share this information with friends and family members.

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