



Press Release

City of Redondo Beach
Public Information Office

415 Diamond Street
Redondo Beach, CA 90277
(310) 379-2477 x2309

September 2, 2014

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Subject : Green Dot Pre-Paid Card Scam

Contact : PIO -Sergeant Shawn Freeman 310-379-2477 ext. 2309

Redondo Beach Police Department is warning residents about the latest variation on the Green Dot MoneyPak scam. Over the last weekend, individuals have called residents pretending to be Redondo Beach Police Officers, and threatening arrests for missing jury duty. The fraudsters claim that the residents must pay an immediate fine. The would be theifs tell the residents to purchase Green Dot MoneyPak's and provide the theifs the access PIN to obtain the money. Fortunately the residents did not fall for the scam, and notified Redondo Beach Police about the scam.

What is Green Dot MoneyPak?

Green Dot MoneyPak is a prepaid card usually used by people who don't have bank accounts. Green Dot is a leading provider of prepaid debit cards. The Green Dot personalized Card is a prepaid Visa or debit MasterCard Card that you can use anywhere debit MasterCard or Visa debit cards are accepted worldwide. The card is prepaid, which means you need to add money to your Card in order to use it. It does not offer a line of credit like credit cards. The cards are available at retail stores like Walmart and CVS for around \$5.00. They can be loaded with money, and then used to shop online or to add money to a PayPal account.

How the scam works

Although the latest scam involved someone claiming to be a Redondo Beach Police Department employee, the Green Dot MoneyPak scams are not new: A fraudster calls and pretends to be a representative from a utility company or an agent from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service. The victim is told that he's in default for a debt and must pay immediately to avoid having his heat shut off, or, in some cases, to avoid deportation. The victim is then told to buy a Green Dot MoneyPak card, load it with a specific amount of cash, and transfer the serial number to the swindler who then transfers the money to another card.

Scam artists are big fans of the Green Dot MoneyPak card because it isn't linked to a bank account and just like cash, it's untraceable. Unlike cash, though, the transaction can be done over the phone, so it's totally anonymous, making it just about impossible to catch the criminal. Also, the card offers no consumer

protection from fraud, so the victim isn't getting their money back.

Be suspicious of callers who demand immediate payment for any reason.

- Remember that anyone who has the number on a Green Dot MoneyPak card has access to the funds on the card.
- Never give out personal or financial information to anyone who emails or calls you unsolicited.
- Never wire money, provide debit or credit card numbers or Green Dot MoneyPak card numbers to someone you do not know.
- Utility companies and government agencies (e.g. Redondo Beach Police, IRS) will not contact you demanding immediate payment by MoneyPak.

This press release was prepared by Sergeant Shawn Freeman.