



**SINGAPORE
POLICE FORCE**
SAFEGUARDING EVERY DAY

POLICE NEWS RELEASE

POLICE ADVISORY ON CHINA OFFICIALS IMPERSONATION SCAM

The Police would like to alert the public to a new variant of the China Officials impersonation scam whereby callers impersonated as staff from the Ministry of Health (MOH) before referring victims to scammers claiming to be China Officials. Since March 2020, the Police received at least five such reports, with total losses amounting to more than \$110,000.

2 In the latest variant, callers impersonating as MOH staff would claim that China officials had seized parcels containing contraband medicine to treat COVID-19, which are registered under the victims' names. The calls would then be transferred to another person claiming to be from the 'Chinese Police' investigating the case. The victims would be duped into believing that their identities had been misused and that they needed to provide their personal information such as NRIC, passport details and internet banking credentials for investigation in order to absolve themselves from any criminal offence. The victims were also instructed not to disclose any information, and were asked to contact the 'Chinese Police' on a daily basis.

3 In past cases of China Officials impersonation scam, scammers had impersonated as staff from courier companies, telecommunication service providers, or officers from government organisations, informing victims of the following:

- A mobile number registered in their name was linked to a crime;
- There was a pending court case against them; and/or
- They had committed a criminal offence and were required to assist in investigations.

4 The Police would like to emphasise to the public that authorities will not ask them for their banking credentials or to transfer monies to bank accounts. Members of the public are advised to take the following precautions when they receive unsolicited calls, especially from unknown parties:

- a. **Don't panic** – Ignore the calls and caller's instructions. No government agency will request for transfer of money, personal details or bank account login credentials over the phone. Call a trusted friend or talk to a relative before you act as you may be overwhelmed by emotion and err in your judgment.
- b. **Don't believe** – Scammers may use caller ID spoofing technology to mask the actual phone number and display a different number. Calls that appear to be from a local number may not actually be made from Singapore. From 15 April 2020, all incoming international calls will be prefixed with a plus (+) sign. Stay vigilant when receiving any unexpected international calls, and reject those which spoof local numbers.
- c. **Don't give** – Do not provide your name, identification number, passport details, contact details, bank account or credit card details, and One-Time-Password (OTP). Such information are useful to criminals.

5 If you wish to provide any information related to such scams, please call the Police hotline at **1800-255-0000**, or submit it online at www.police.gov.sg/iwitness. If you require urgent Police assistance, please dial **'999'**.

6 For scam-related advice, please call the National Crime Prevention Council's anti-scam helpline at **1800-722-6688** or visit www.scamalert.sg. Join the 'let's fight scams' campaign at www.scamalert.sg/fight by signing up as an advocate to receive up-to-date messages and share them with your family and friends. Together, we can help stop scams and prevent our loved ones from becoming the next scam victim.

**PUBLIC AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT
SINGAPORE POLICE FORCE
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