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FOR THE C.A.S.E. PROGRAM

FRAUD ALERT!

LET GRAMMAR BE YOUR GUIDE WHEN DECIPHERING SCAMS



Unfortunately, when it comes to email scams, everyone is a target. The world communicates electronically and as much as you try to set up appropriate firewalls, spam alerts and junk-mail filters, sometimes a fraudulent email still makes its way into your in box. It even happens here at the District Attorney's Office. Recently, an employee received an email purportedly from the Government Accountability Office (G.A.O) of the United States. We forwarded the email to the G.A.O. as a courtesy to alert them that someone was fraudulently using their name and logo. They replied stating that the original email was a scam — which of course we knew within a few seconds after receiving the original message. How? Grammar and spelling.

Most fraudulent emails and letters are usually full of poor grammar and misspellings. For example, the fraudulent G.A.O. email mentioned above begins: **“in response from the usa accountability office secretary in charge. you are here by contacted to follow our direction for your fund which was not released a long time now thats why we have intervained on this matter concerning how you will receive your fund.”**

If you receive an email or a letter that you think may be fraudulent, read through it and look for improper capitalization, incomplete sentences, misspellings and incorrect punctuation. And don't forget to ask yourself, “Does this sentence or paragraph even make sense?”

Another way to decipher if an email or letter is fraudulent is to look at the overall presentation of the piece. Are there different sizes of type? Are there different fonts or type styles? Is the format of the letter or email professional looking? Remember, anyone can download a logo and put it on anything so a logo isn't an indication of an authentic document. Also, professional organizations spend a significant amount of money to hire graphic designers to create logos, stationary and letter formats so that the business correspondence appears professional and consistent — con artists do not. In fact, you will discover that a lot of fraudulent documents are actually very sloppy when closely examined.

Contact your local police agency if you think you are a victim of a crime.
To contact the Weld County District Attorney's Office, call (970) 356-4010 ext. 4702.
To view other Fraud Alerts, please go to www.weldda.com and look in the Community Information tab.