**‘Tis the Season.. For Holiday Online Shopping Scams**

**With the supply chain crisis continuing and more people than ever doing their holiday shopping online, the Conejos County Sheriff’s office wants to remind you to be especially vigilant this season, looking out for scams designed to steal your money and your personal information. Here are some common scams**

**Online Shopping Scam:**

**If a deal looks too good to be true, it probably is. Scammers often use phishing email or advertisements to reel victims in. Scammers may offer brand-name merchandise at extremely low prices or offer gift cards as an incentive. Victims end up paying for an item, give personal information and credit card details, and received nothing in return except a compromised or stolen identity. Avoid online shopping scams by only dealing with trustworthy retailers or sites.**

**Social media shopping scam:**

**Beware of posts on social media platforms that offer vouchers and gift cards or appear as special holiday promotions or contests. Sometimes these appear as if friends have used and shared the links. Often these are scams designed to steal personal information. If you click through an ad on a social media platform, do due diligence; check the legitimately of the website and its claims before providing any credit card or personal information.**

**Gift card scams:**

**Gift cards are especially popular options during the holidays. You should be careful, however, where, how, and for whom you purchase a gift cards. A popular gift card scam comes in the form of a request to purchase gift cards for a work or charity related function or as a present for a special occasion. Avoid this scam by purchasing gift cards only from reparable sellers.**

**Charity scams:**

**As the holidays often turn hearts to the needs of others, charity fraud rises dramatically during this benevolent season. Scammers set up false charitable organizations convincing victims they are making donations to legitimate cause. These seasonal charity scams are hard to monitor because they are of limited duration, here today, gone tomorrow, leaving little trace. They typically solicit through cold calls, email, crowd fundraising, and social media platforms. Perpetrators steal the funds and those really in need never see them. Again, do due diligence. Check the legitimately of the charity and its claims. Beware of organizations with copycat names. Make charitable contributions directly, rather than through an intermediary, and a via credit card or check; avoid cash donations, if possible.**

**Conejos County Sheriff’s office wishes you and yours a most wonderful and safe holiday season!**