

Morden Police Service

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Morden Police Service Scam Alert

Morden Police Service has responded to several complaints of gift card scams in the area over the past few months.

Gift cards are a popular way for scammers to steal money from you. That's because gift cards are like cash: if you buy a gift card and someone uses it, you probably cannot get your money back. Gift cards are for gifts, not payments. Anyone who demands payment by gift card is always a scammer.

Many kinds of scammers ask people to pay with gift cards. They may call and claim to be from the CRA, collecting back taxes or fines. They might also claim to be from tech support, asking for money to fix a person's computer or the caller may also state that they're a family member with an emergency who needs money.

In each incident, the common theme is that the caller needs for you to send money immediately.

Here's what happens: the caller will often tell you to go buy a popular gift card, commonly, iTunes, Google Play, Walmart or Amazon. The caller will tell you to get the card at a particular store near you. They may even have you buy several cards at several stores. Sometimes, the caller will stay on the phone with you while you go to the store. Once you buy the card, the caller then will demand the gift card number and PIN on the back of the card. Those numbers let them immediately get the money you loaded onto the card. Once they've done that, the scammers and your money are gone, usually without a trace.

There are a number of solutions that retail employees can enforce to prevent gift card fraud:

Establish physical gift card security. This could mean keeping gift cards secured in glass cases rather than on an open rack.

Limit maximum gift card amounts. This limits financial losses for the customer if their card gets intercepted.

Educate employees. Gift card fraud should be a part of basic training for retail employees and security teams. For example, employees should be trained to detect tampered PIN stickers or keep an eye on exposed gift card racks for suspicious loiterers.

Educate customers. Invest in fraud prevention signage near gift card racks or cashier tills. Some preventative tips include:

- Never respond to any requests to make payments with gift cards.
- Use gift cards as quickly as possible, giving hackers less time to exploit balances.
- Check gift card balances frequently and immediately report suspicious activity.

When in doubt, if an employee observes what they think is an unusual amount of gift cards being purchased, they should encourage the customer to contact local police to determine if this may be a scam. Contact Morden Police Service at 204-822-4900.

Here is a list of cards that scammers often use – with information to help report a scam.

Amazon

- Call 1 (888) 280-4331
- Keep the Amazon card itself and your receipt for the Amazon card.
- Learn about Amazon gift card scams, and how to report them [here](#).

Google Play

- Call 1 (855) 466-4438
- Report gift card scams online [here](#).
- Keep the Google Play card itself and your receipt for the Google Play card.
- Learn about Google Play gift card scams and how to report them [here](#).

iTunes

- Call Apple Support right away at 1 (800) 275-2273. Say “gift card” to connect with a live representative.
- Ask if the money is still on the iTunes card. If so, Apple can put a freeze on it. You might be able to get your money back from them.
- Keep the iTunes card itself and your receipt for the iTunes card.
- Learn about iTunes gift card scams and how to report them [here](#).

Steam

- If you have a Steam account, you can report gift card scams online [here](#).
- Keep the Steam card itself and your receipt for the Steam card.
- Learn about Steam gift card scams and how to report them [here](#).

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