



TEMPLE TERRACE POLICE DEPARTMENT NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

POLICE SAY BEWARE OF POTENTIAL 'RED LIGHT CAMERA SCAM'

(TEMPLE TERRACE, FL – 9/22/11) – The proliferation of red-light cameras across the Tampa Bay area means safer roadways, but police also are cautioning residents to beware of potential scams.

Red-light camera scams have been reported in Texas, Maryland and California, officials say, and with cameras now installed in Temple Terrace, Tampa, Hillsborough County and elsewhere, just about anyone could become a victim, said Deputy Chief Bernard Seeley of the Temple Terrace Police Department.

The scam works like this: A resident receives a telephone call from someone claiming to be from a law-enforcement agency, such as the police department, saying the resident has an overdue citation from a traffic camera violation. The caller advises that if the outstanding violation isn't paid immediately, an arrest warrant will be issued.

The scammer will usually request that the ticket be paid via credit card, debit card, or by asking for bank account information. The scammer may also ask for a Social Security number or other personal information. Of course, the scammer makes off with the money, perhaps wiping out a bank account, before the victim realizes this was a scam.

"We're not aware of this scam being carried out locally yet, but with new cameras coming online throughout the area, it's only a matter of time," Seeley said. "We want to get ahead of the game and warn residents to beware of possible scams involving red-light cameras."

This type of scam works because many people are intimidated when they come into contact with a law-enforcement officer and are afraid of being arrested. Motorists may believe a traffic camera captured them running a red light without their being aware of it, when in fact they may not have committed an infraction at all.

In the case of an overdue citation, Seeley said, no one will contact you by phone or e-mail to advise that you owe a fine. You will only receive a Notice of Violation by U.S. mail. Never provide personal information over the phone to a stranger who calls you, police say, even if the caller sounds "official." Instead, contact your local law-enforcement agency directly to inquire about the incident.

Temple Terrace residents who have questions about their red-light camera Notice of Violation should contact the Temple Terrace Police Department at (813) 506-6500.