

Police partners need people to recognize, reject and report fraud

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) and its Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre partners have been running their annual Fraud Prevention Month campaign to prevent thousands of Canadians from falling victim to fraud.

March is Fraud Prevention Month. During the month, OPP, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and the Competition Bureau of Canada are joining police services across the country to promote public awareness to help prevent all Canadians from becoming victims of fraud.

This year, the OPP's Fraud Prevention Month education campaign will highlight three mass marketing fraud priorities, including Emergency Scam and Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) Scam; Romance Scam; and Microsoft/Computer Service Scams.

Fraud-related crimes take a destructive toll on victims while amassing millions of dollars to further criminal enterprises. Sadly, 95 per cent of fraud victims never report the crime to police.

Regardless of age, gender and location, everyone can take basic steps to better protect themselves from becoming victims of fraud. Some basic tips include never giving out personal or financial information at the door, over the phone, by email or through social media, or on to unsecured retail or dating websites.

OPP will be posting tips and links to various resources online. The public is encouraged to engage in the conversation to help them recognize, reject and report fraud on social media by using the hashtags #FPM2017 #DontBeAVictim and #OPPtips.

Those who suspect they've been a victim of fraud, or who know someone who might have been a victim, should contact police or the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre through a new, easy to use Fraud Reporting System (FRS). To report fraud or any crime anonymously, contact Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 or online at www.tipsubmit.com/start.htm

"Criminals prey on society's most vulnerable people to fuel further criminal activities," OPP Deputy Commissioner Rick Barnum said. "We all need to do what we can to ensure the public recognizes and reports all types of fraud to prevent further harm and victimization."

Fraud Prevention Month is in its 13th year. From January 2014 to December 2016, it is estimated that Canadians lost more than \$290 million to fraudsters. For more fraud facts and figures and a downloadable booklet (PDF), visit The Competition Bureau of Canada website at www.competitionbureau.gc.ca/eic/site/cb-bc.nsf/eng/04201.html