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STATE OF ALASKA



Department of
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Anchorage, Alaska

PRESS RELEASE

Beware: Scam Targets Families of Missing Persons

March 2, 2021 (Anchorage, Alaska) — The Department of Public Safety is aware of a new scam that has targeted some Alaskans already. Internet trolls are scouring social media for posts regarding actual missing persons. The scam takes advantage of the information they find to send text messages to the family member(s) of the missing. The scammer demands a ransom for the safe return of the missing person who they claim to have kidnapped and now is sick. The scammer warns people not to contact the police. Scams can eventually trick people into paying money into a Pay Pal or making similar methods of payment.

“This scam is particularly disturbing and abhorrent as distraught families are already navigating the uncertainty and grief associated with their loved one’s disappearance,” stated **Colonel Bryan Barlow, Director of the Alaska State Troopers**. “Not only will the family potentially fall for the scam and lose money, the scam itself can exponentially intensify the grief and anxiety they are already feeling. We must raise public awareness for these despicable scams for the wellbeing of all Alaskans.”

If you are the recipient of such a text message asking for money in exchange for your missing loved one, do not respond to the message. Instead, report the scam to akcic@alaska.gov and also notify the agency that has case responsibility for your missing persons case.

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