



For Immediate Release
HINGHAM POLICE
DEPARTMENT

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Police Warn of Officers Name Being Used in Online Scams

Hingham, MA – Police are warning that an Officers name and photos are being fraudulently used on social media and on a dating site to scam money from victims. The scammer(s) have been seeking money wired to them and personal credit card information from the victims.

Over the last four weeks, Hingham Police gave been contacted by women who wanted to report a person representing themselves as our Public Information Officer, Sgt. Steven Dearth, using numerous fake Instagram accounts and on several fake “PlentyofFish.com” accounts. The fake accounts use actual photos taken from the professional social media accounts of Sgt. Dearth.

At least 6 of the victims reported engaging in a dialogue through texting or direct messages over a period of a week or two to gain trust. The scammer(s) have then been asked to wire money to an account or supply their own credit card information so the scammer(s) can pay off their balance to show the victim that he can be trusted. The scammer(s) then use the victim’s credit card information fraudulently. The scammer(s) use the name and photos of a police officer to gain the trust of the victim and to gain sympathy claim they are a widower.

The victims who became suspicious contacted the Hingham Police Department directly using the contact information on the Department’s website to alert the police of the scam. Once each account is reported as fake by the victim, they are closed, but new ones are opened days later with a different user name and the same photos.

As always, we urge you to never wire money, share credit card information or personal information online without first verifying who you are sharing it with and always report any fraud to the website or social media account.

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