



AD2021-018

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EMBASSY ADVISORY

Banking-Related Phishing Scams Involving Impersonation of Government Officials

The Philippine Embassy wishes to alert the members of the Filipino community to a new *modus operandi* of scammers observed by the Singapore Police Force (SPF) since December 2020. In this new variant, banking-related scammers would impersonate officials of the SPF or Ministry of Manpower (MOM), claim that there are some issues with the victims' bank accounts, and get details such as internet banking credentials, NRIC/FIN and One-Time Password (OTP) to resolve these issues.

In view of this new scam variant, *kababayans* are advised to follow these crime prevention measures:

- **Don't panic.** Ignore the call and callers' instructions even if they claim to be police or MOM officers. No government agency will request for personal details or bank account login details over the phone.
- **Don't believe.** Scammers may use caller ID spoofing technology to mask actual phone numbers which are usually overseas numbers. Since April 2020, all international numbers have been prefixed with a plus (+).
- **Don't give.** Never disclose your personal or internet banking details and OTP to anyone.

Please see annexed police news release on the subject for more information.

Thank you.

The Philippine Embassy, Singapore
28 January 2021



POLICE NEWS RELEASE

BANKING-RELATED PHISHING SCAMS INVOLVING IMPERSONATION OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

The Police would like to alert members of the public to a new variant of banking-related phishing scams observed since December 2020, where scammers impersonate as government officials.

2 Members of the public who have fallen victim to such phishing scams would receive phone calls or messages purportedly from government agencies such as the Singapore Police Force or Ministry of Manpower, claiming that there were some issues with the victims' bank accounts and that they would need to verify their banking or personal particulars such as internet banking login credentials, NRIC number/ FIN and One-Time-Passwords (OTPs) to resolve these issues. The victims would realise that they had been scammed when they discovered unauthorised transactions made from their accounts.

3 The Police would like to highlight that from January 2020 to June 2020, close to 900 cases of banking-related phishing scams were reported, with total losses amounting to more than S\$3.6 million. In the same period in 2019, 34 cases of such scams were reported, with total losses amounting to more than \$93,000.

4 Members of the public are advised to follow these crime prevention measures:

- a) **Don't panic** - Ignore the call and callers' instructions. No government agency will request for personal details or bank account login details over the phone. Call a trusted friend or talk to a relative before you act as you may be overwhelmed by emotion and err in your judgement.

- b) **Don't believe** - Scammers may use caller ID spoofing technology to mask the actual phone numbers and display a different number. Calls that appear to be from local number may not actually be made from Singapore. From 15 April 2020, all incoming international calls will be prefixed with a plus (+) sign. Stay vigilant when receiving any unexpected international calls, and reject those with spoof local numbers.

- c) **Don't give** - Never disclose your personal or Internet banking details and OTP to anyone.

5 If you have information related to such crimes or if you are in doubt, please call the Police hotline at 1800-255-0000, or submit it online at www.police.gov.sg/iwitness. Please dial '999' if you require urgent Police assistance.

6 For more information on scams, members of the public can visit www.scamalert.sg or call the anti-scam hotline at 1800-722-6688. Join the 'Spot the Signs. Stop the Crimes' campaign at www.scamalert.sg/fight by signing up as an advocate to receive up-to-date messages and share them with your family and friends. Together, we can help stop scams and prevent our loved ones from becoming the next victim.

**PUBLIC AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT
SINGAPORE POLICE FORCE
5 JANUARY 2021 @ 3:15 PM**