



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

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STATE WARNS OF NEW SCAM TARGETING LICENSEES

HONOLULU — The state Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (DCCA) is warning its licensees and the general public of scammers posing as state officials to intimidate potential victims into divulging personal information.

In the latest scam attempt reported to the Professional and Vocational Licensing Division (PVL) this week, a registered nurse received a phone call with the caller ID displaying the state office's actual phone number. The caller pretended to be from the state Board of Nursing and told the nurse that she was under investigation before proceeding to request confirmation of personal information, including bank account information. A person claiming to be a police officer also spoke on the phone in the effort to intimidate the nurse.

DCCA advises the public that before any telephone communication occurs, a professional or vocational licensee that is under investigation by the department would first be notified in writing from the Regulated Industries Complaints Office (RICO). RICO will also never ask for private or sensitive information over the telephone. In addition, RICO does not employ police officers or use them for any part of its investigative work. Licensees can call 587-4272 to confirm if they are the subject of a formal RICO investigation.

While in this recent instance the target was a nurse, it is likely that the caller could spoof another phone number and pretend to call from another state board in other attempts to scam different licensees. With any suspicious phone call, DCCA advises that a safe practice is to hang up before revealing any personal information and for the individual to initiate a return phone call by calling a number researched on their own, rather than relying on the caller ID, to ensure that they are speaking with the actual agency.

Suspected scams may also be reported to the Federal Trade Commission online at <https://www.ftc.gov/complaint>.

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