

CHARLESTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
Sheriff Carl Ritchie
3691 Leeds Avenue
North Charleston, SC 29405




NON-EMERGENCY
843-202-1700


DISPATCH
843-743-7200

CCSO implements inmate search delay to protect families from scams

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, February 11, 2026

NORTH CHARLESTON, S.C. – The Charleston County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) has introduced a short delay in posting inmate booking information online and through its mobile app. This proactive measure is designed to protect families and individuals from financial scams that have targeted community members in recent years.

This decision follows repeated incidents of fraudulent calls in which scammers impersonated law enforcement and demanded money for bail or other fees. Between October 2024 and October 2025, CCSO reviewed approximately 188 fraud and suspicious circumstance reports, eight of which were identified as jail bail scams. Since implementing this delay, CCSO has not received any reports of these types of scams—a promising sign that this approach is working to protect our community, especially older adults.

This issue has spanned several administrations and continues to plague communities across the nation. We are proud that the staff at the Charleston County Sheriff's Office has brainstormed a way to find some relief for a small part of this problem. We hope to be a model for other agencies.

"Most individuals brought to the Sheriff Al Cannon Detention Center remain in our care for less than 24 hours," said CCSO Public Information Officer Lexi Douglas. "Those hours are critical in preventing scammers from exploiting families during a vulnerable time. By delaying online postings, many individuals return home before scammers have an opportunity to target them."

While this is an encouraging step forward, scams remain widespread and are often underreported. We urge community members to stay vigilant.

Key Facts:

- The delay applies only to online and app postings.
- Booking information remains available to the public at the Sheriff Al Cannon Detention Center lobby on Leeds Avenue. A list will be printed daily at 9 a.m. and placed next to the visitor's log for public viewing. No copies will be made.
- CCSO will NEVER call to request money for bail or any other reason.

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Scams to Watch Out For:

- **Government Impersonation** – Fake calls from the “IRS,” “Social Security,” or “Police” claiming your identity is compromised or that there’s a warrant for your arrest, you have missed jury duty, etc.
- **Tech Support Scams** – Pop-ups or calls falsely claiming your computer is infected, asking for remote access or unusual forms of payment.
- **Phishing Emails** – Messages that appear to be from banks, Amazon, or government agencies, urging you to click suspicious links or call fake numbers.
- **Romance & Friendship Scams** – Fraudulent online relationships that build emotional trust before asking for money—often using AI-generated photos or deepfake videos.
- **The Grandparent Scam** – A caller pretends to be a grandchild in trouble, using AI to mimic their voice and create a sense of urgency.

The Sheriff’s Office shares that remembering these three Rs could help people pause and think twice before acting, with the hopes of saving people from becoming a victim.

- **RETHINK** – If it causes panic or fear, slow down.
- **REFUSE** – Never pay with gift cards, crypto, or payment apps.
- **RESEARCH** – Hang up and verify the story by calling the real number.

People should never send payment to scammers in any way, but especially with gift cards (Apple, Amazon, etc.), cryptocurrency (Bitcoin ATMs), payment apps (Zelle, Venmo), wire transfers, and/or cash couriers. People are also reminded to never give remote access to their computers or devices, nor should they share any personal information (Social Security, Medicare, or bank info).

What to Do If You've Been Scammed or Targeted:

1. Report the Incident Locally

- Charleston County Sheriff's Office (CCSO): If you or a loved one were the victim of a scam, call the Non-Emergency Line at 843-202-1700.
- South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs: To file a consumer complaint or get education and support at 1-800-922-1594.
- Adult Protective Services (APS): If you suspect a vulnerable adult (including yourself) is being abused, neglected, or financially exploited in the community, call the 24/7 reporting hotline at 1-888-CARE4US (1-888-227-3487).

2. Contact Your Financial Institution

3. Report to National Agencies

- Federal Trade Commission (FTC): Report all scams, regardless of financial loss, at ReportFraud.ftc.gov or call 1-877-FTC-HELP (382-4357).

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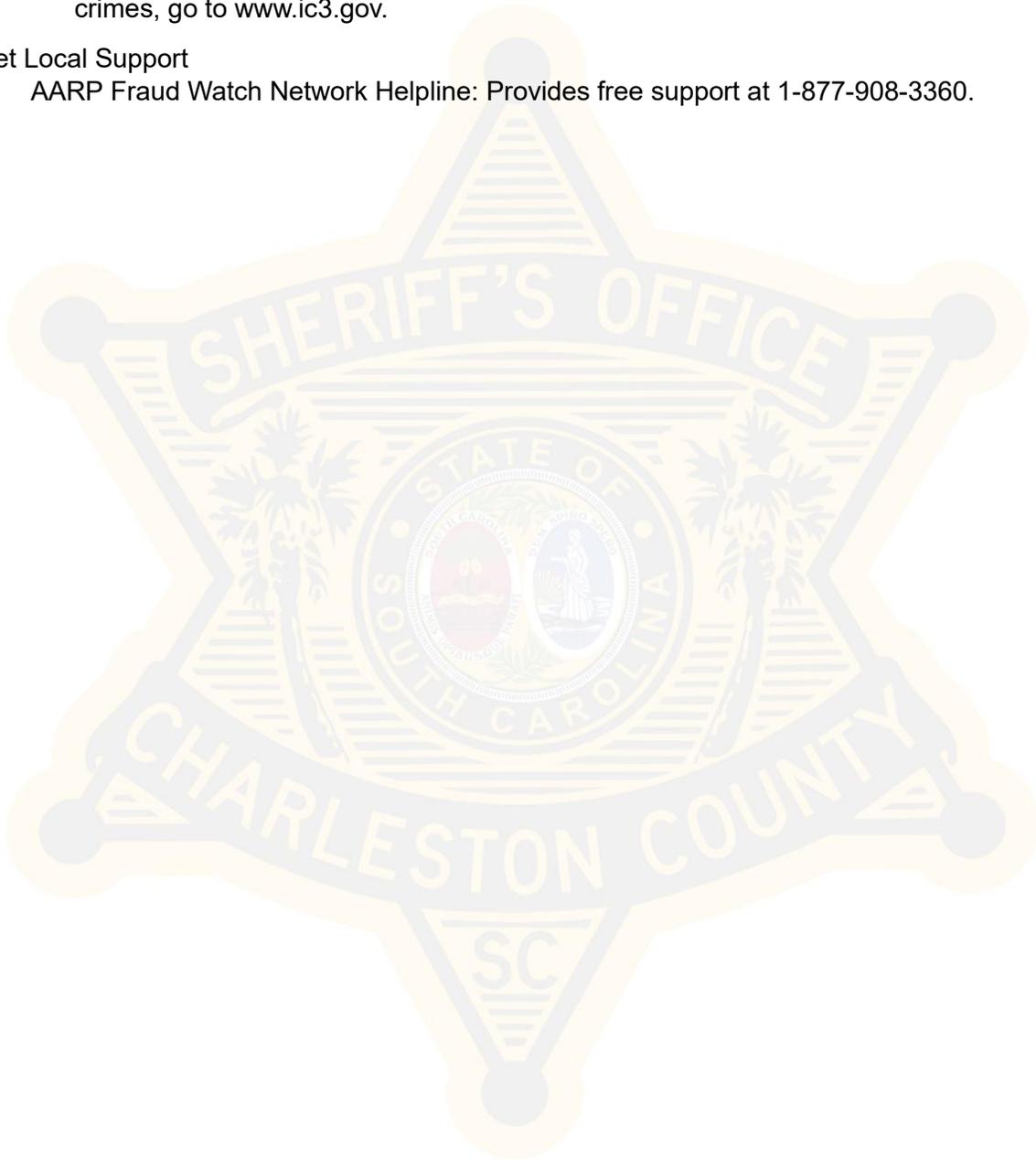
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- FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3): For internet-related or major financial crimes, go to www.ic3.gov.
4. Get Local Support
- AARP Fraud Watch Network Helpline: Provides free support at 1-877-908-3360.



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