FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Stay Alert: The Holiday Season Is Also Scamming Season

Protect your personal information and recognize warning signs

As the 2026 holiday season approaches, the City of McAllen Police Department is reminding residents to remain vigilant against scammers who may attempt to take advantage of the season to deceive individuals and steal personal information. Scammers, many operating from outside the United States, use deceptive tactics to target unsuspecting individuals, making it especially important for residents to recognize suspicious calls and protect their personal information.

The City of McAllen Police Department and other city departments reminds residents that city personnel will **NOT** call to provide or inquire about sensitive personal matters, nor will they request Personal Identification Data (PID). PID refers to information that can identify an individual, either on its own or when combined with other details. This information includes:

- Full name
- Date of birth
- Social Security number (SSN)
- Passport number
- Driver's license number
- Email address

“Our top priority during this festive time of year is keeping the community safe, but public safety is a partnership. Scammers rely heavily on high-pressure tactics, fear, or a false sense of urgency to catch people off guard, especially during the holidays. The McAllen Police Department will never call you to request personal identification data or demand immediate financial details over the phone. We urge all residents to trust their instincts, if a call feels suspicious, hang up immediately, protect your personal data, and report it,” said McAllen Police Chief Victor Rodriguez.

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Anyone who receives a suspicious call involving possible fraud, scams or deceptive business practices is encouraged to file a report with the Federal Trade Commission at ReportFraud.ftc.gov. Unwanted calls can also be reported through the National Do Not Call Registry.

The U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) offers several recommendations to help consumers recognize and avoid phone scams. Residents are encouraged to take the following precautions:

- Don't answer calls from numbers you don't know.
- Hang up right away if someone asks for money or personal information.
- If you feel pressured, or a caller asks you to pay with gift cards, it's a scam!
- Never share account numbers, Social Security numbers, passwords, PINs, or other important information over the phone.
- If someone says they're calling from a company or a government agency, hang up and call back using an official phone number from an account statement (if you have one) or their website.
- Don’t respond to texts or click on links sent from numbers you don’t recognize.
- Set up strong passwords for your voicemail so it doesn’t get hacked.
- Talk to your phone company about call blocking tools they may have and check into apps that you can download to your mobile device to block unwanted calls.
- Check the FCC Scam Glossary for detailed breakdowns of specific robocall scams.
- Help us spread the word by talking to your family and friends about phone-based scams.

“The holiday season should be a time for family, celebration, and community not financial exploitation. As bad actors continually adapt their strategies using sophisticated phone scams, we want to ensure our residents remain fully informed and vigilant. The City of McAllen remains completely transparent in our outreach, and our public agencies will never conduct unexpected phone inquiries regarding sensitive or personal matters. Let’s look out for one another by spreading awareness to friends, neighbors, and loved ones so we can protect our community together,” said City Manager Isaac J. Tawil.

The Office of Communications has also created printable scam awareness flyers specifically designed for local business owners and managers. Business operators are highly encouraged to display these flyers in breakrooms, employee common areas, or at point-of-sale terminals to help protect both their staff and customers from seasonal fraud. To download the digital flyers or to request physical copies for your business, please visit the official City of McAllen website.

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About the City of McAllen
Founded in 1904 and incorporated in 1911, the City of McAllen has grown from a small agricultural community into one of the most vibrant and fastest-growing cities along the U.S.–Mexico border. Known as the “City of Palms,” McAllen serves as a hub for international trade, retail, tourism, and culture in the Rio Grande Valley.
Today, the city employs more than 2,600 dedicated public servants across 41 departments, delivering essential services to a community of more than 150,000 residents. City leaders remain committed to transparent governance, fiscal responsibility, and enhancing quality of life through innovation, infrastructure, and community engagement.
For more information, visit **www.mcallen.net**.