

City of

Marathon *Florida*

Press Release (#98-26) | CITY OF MARATHON
9805 Overseas Highway Marathon, Florida 33050
305-743-0033

For Immediate Release:

Keep yourself safe from scammers

MARATHON, FL (Sept. 14, 2026) – Throughout the Florida Keys and the nation, people are being bombarded by schemes and scams designed to separate unwitting victims from their finances.



Last month in Key Colony Beach, scammers targeted applicants with upcoming planning and zoning matters by pretending to represent the city and requesting payment for purported permit fees.

Mayor Freddi Foster had the city send out a public notice to alert the community to the scam.

During the summer, Monroe County officials alerted residents to a scam where an invoice appears to be from the Monroe County Building Department, Monroe County Planning Department, or Monroe County Planning Commission.

Monroe County and the Monroe County Planning Commission do not ask for wire transfers to pay building permit fees and do not send emails requesting anything related to wire transfer instructions.

County officials recommend people do not open attachments or respond to emails or numbers listed in suspicious requests, noting emails from county departments end with @monroecounty-fl.gov or @monroecounty-fl.org.

Phone numbers for the county departments can be found at the county's website at <https://www.monroecounty-fl.gov>.



Additionally, the Monroe County Sheriff's Office has warned people of phone and text scams pressuring victims into paying with cryptocurrency or gift cards.

The most common is a warrant or jury duty scam in which callers impersonate law enforcement officers, court officials or other government employees. They will threaten immediate arrest or other action and demand payment — often by gift card or cryptocurrency — and sometimes direct victims to a cryptocurrency ATM or wallet, the Sheriff's Office said.

“Criminals often falsely identify themselves as local law enforcement officers, bank officials or business owners and mask distant phone numbers with local caller ID,” the Sheriff's Office said. The agency urges people to hang up and contact the organization or person directly if they receive a suspicious call or text.

Other frequent schemes include the advance-fee scam, in which victims are promised a large reward, investment opportunity, inheritance, prize or loan but are told to pay an upfront fee for processing costs, legal expenses or taxes. After the initial payment, scammers either demand more money or disappear.

Also, romance scams in which fraudsters build trust on dating apps or social media, then persuade victims to invest in fake cryptocurrency platforms, send cryptocurrency directly or provide money for fabricated emergencies.

Florida Keys residents are reminded many of these crimes are committed from other jurisdictions, which can complicate investigations. In any event, report suspected scams to local law enforcement.

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